

# Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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## INSIDE



### New Officers

Hundreds of people trooped to the World Resort Hotel last Friday to witness the installation of the 2004 officers of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, in a glittering ceremony made more noteworthy with the opening remarks of Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

Page 9



### Liberator

Lt. Col. Scott Rutter finished his steak. Not just any steak. It was the "Melbourne, the big steak, the prime rib with the baked potato," he laughed. The first thing he did when he returned to the United States was go to a steak house.

Page 20

### VIRTUE OF THE WEEK

#### Patience

"O you who believe, seek courage in fortitude and prayer, for God is with those who are patient and persevere."

—Al-Qur'an 2:153

See Page 13

# CUC pay below US level

## But above Pacific rates

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Overall, the salaries of Commonwealth Utilities Corp. employees are below the national market but above the Pacific market, according to the CUC-hired Fox Lawson consultancy group.

In a report that contained findings that the CUC board adopted Friday, Fox Lawson said that CUC's pay practices are below market, but its benefits are above market.

It also said that overall, CUC salaries are 1 percent below the overall market; 13.7 percent below the mainland market, and 15.1 percent above the Pacific market.

Fox Lawson said it ran three analyses and compared them with CUC. These included all participants (mainland and Pacific), mainland participants only, and Pacific participants only.

The consultancy group surveyed a  
See CUC on Page 8



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### CONSTRUCTING JUSTICE

CNMI Supreme Court Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan, second right, and Rota Mayor Benjamin Manglona, center, lead the Commonwealth's magistrates during a groundbreaking ceremony to kick off the construction of the Rota judicial center. From left to right are Associate Justices John A. Manglona and Alexandro C. Castro, Mayor Manglona, Demapan and Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona. **See story on Page 4.**

## Salas appointed DOL deputy secretary

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Gov. Juan N. Babauta has appointed former Saipan congressman Andrew Salas as deputy secretary of the Department of Labor.

"His papers are being processed for that position," said the governor in an interview.

Salas, who lost his senatorial bid in the 2003 mid-term polls, was earlier rumored to being groomed to head the

Department of Commerce Secretary portfolio.

In earlier reports, Salas, a former director of the Commerce Department, denied the Cabinet posting and said, "As a matter of fact, I'm not even looking for work right now."



Salas

He said he simply wants to complete a house in As Matuis and, possibly, pursue a law profession.

Salas, who chaired the House Committee on Commerce, had earlier criticized the lengthy delay in work permit processing at the Department of Labor. This drawn-out bureaucracy, he said, was tantamount to stopping commerce.

He had cited that new businesses that have contemplated setting up shop in the

See SALAS on Page 8

## CNMI issues to be tackled in White House

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

CNMI issues will be discussed at the top level when President Bush's recently reactivated Interagency Group on Insular Areas convenes in the White House next month.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta, a member of the group, said the meeting will take place during the National Governor's Association meeting on Feb. 18 to 23 in Washington D.C.

"It's a small group meeting, an informal discussion on issues affecting the insular areas," he said.

Babauta said the agenda will include "all kinds of issues" such as the CNMI representation in the U.S. Congress, funding for water projects, and taxes due the CNMI under the provisions of the CNMI-U.S. Covenant.

The interagency meeting participants

See CNMI on Page 8



## Tan is SCC's Business Person of the Year

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Jerry Tan, who is executive vice president of the Tan Holdings Corp., has been chosen as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Business Person of the Year for 2003.

Citing his business acumen, community involvement, and personal

See TAN on Page 8

# Local

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### December 2003 Violations in Saipan’s Public Water System

#### Water Samples Tested for Bacteria of “Total Coliforms” Exceeded the Allowable Monthly Standards

(SAIPAN, Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004)— The CNMI Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received a January 8<sup>th</sup> report summarizing drinking water analysis for Saipan, Rota, and Tinian for December 2003. In Saipan, the Public Water System tested positive for both Total and Fecal Coliform bacteria, exceeding the CNMI Drinking Water Regulations and standards for the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) from: December 9-12<sup>th</sup> and December 15-19<sup>th</sup> 2003. Public Notice was immediately issued for the Fecal Coliform/E. Coli violations. The Utility collected a total of 79 water samples in Saipan and turned them over to an independent, private company for laboratory analysis. The results also tested positive for “Total Coliform” bacteria. DEQ regulations, based on population, allow no more than five point zero percent (5.0%) of the water samples in any month may contain these bacteria. In Saipan, fourteen percent (14 %) of the water samples tested positive for Total Coliforms.

#### EPA Says: Total Coliforms Common in Environment

The EPA determines that Total Coliforms **are common in the environment** and **generally not harmful**. When detected in drinking water, however, Total Coliforms indicate that CUC has problems with its Water Maintenance Program, the Water Treatment Program (Chlorine Stations), and older, cracked, & fractured pipes that deliver water. When it rains, underground contamination [pollution—animal wastes, oils, and chemicals seep into the broken pipes or the “runoff” goes to the lagoon and oceans.] This means that the *water treatment* may not work when contaminated by organisms that can cause disease.

Maintenance and operations programs are, therefore, public health concerns, if monthly water standards are not achieved. This also causes consumers to buy additional bottled water. The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is required to inform DEQ; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and, in this Public Notice, **we educate you of problems in the CNMI Water Quality Programs.**

#### Health Effects

Contaminated water can cause disease. Short-term health effects include: diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or possibly jaundice, and associated fatigue. These symptoms however, are not only associated with waterborne illness.

**Corrective Actions Taken:** The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation increased Chlorine Gas Injections and upper management works to ensure that daily maintenance and monitoring of the Chlorine Stations improves to ensure public health & safety. Additional support (money) is requested from US & CNMI programs to finish water projects, **including desalination facilities**, to help people suffering from the lack of water resources and no development underway for the western shoreline from Lower Base to San Jose, Puerto Rico, Navy Hill, and China Town, etc.

#### Want More Information?

For more information about water operations, customers may contact CUC Water Manager Jess Castro or CUC Special Advisor Pamela A. Mathis at 235-7025. Call the CUC Lab at: 322-4051. Questions that relate to the CNMI Safe Drinking Water Regulations may be addressed to DEQ at the Safe Drinking Water Branch at 664-8509.

LOTTERY



# Cleanup volunteers start work on 4 drainages

By JOHN RAVELO  
REPORTER

Some 73 volunteers tackled four stormwater drainage sites along Saipan’s western shores yesterday, as non-profit group MOVER kicked off its major cleanup project that is funded by a \$5,000-grant from oil giant Exxon/Mobil.

The project gained support from various sectors in the community, including Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, lawmakers and private groups.

Benavente provided the volunteers snacks, while House

Rep. Benjamin Seman gave them lunch. Pacific Islands Club offered the volunteers pastries, while Pacific Trading Co. Ltd. contributed five cases of softdrinks. Some eight volunteers from KAMPIL joined MOVER in the cleanup activity.

Benny Pangelinan, the chairman of the Environmental Interagency Cleanup Operation Team, said other lawmakers have committed to provide logistical support in the coming weeks. EICOT is supporting MOVER, which has slated eight consecutive Sundays to complete the cleanup project

covering more than 20 drainage sites along Beach Road.

He said he would ask House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial to provide lunch on one Sunday. Pangelinan said he requested other lawmakers to sponsor the volunteers’ lunch during the cleanup activities, which gained positive response. Lawmakers who have vowed to provide support include House Vice Speaker Timothy Villagomez, and Reps. Ramon Tebuteb, Joe Guerrero, Oscar Babauta, Jesus Lizama, and Ray Yumul.

“People are out to support the organization’s [MOVER]

objectives,” Pangelinan said.

MOVER president Bonnie Sagana welcomed the participation of KAMPIL volunteers, as he expressed hope that the community project would unite Filipino organizations in the CNMI. He said he would invite another Filipino group associated with EICOT—the Bicol Association—to join the project.

KAMPIL president Honorio Cambronero said he would urge other member to assist in MOVER’s project. He said he would also invite another Filipino group, the Samahang Ilokano-Pangasinense, to pool

volunteers in the coming weeks.

The volunteers removed bottles, broken glasses and trash from the drainage sites at the back of the PIC, the Hopwood Junior High School, and between the backside of the Pacific Gardenia Hotel and Aquarius Resort. MOVER vice president Jun Agda, the project manager, dispatched separate teams to simultaneously clean up four drainage sites.

Sand accretion totally clogged one of the two drainages at the back of Hopwood that volunteers had to shovel them to the sides. When they cleared the

drainage’s mouth, ponded runoff that emitted foul smell began to seep through it.

The volunteers also painted the drainage sites. Joined by volunteers from the Coastal Resources Management Office, they also picked up debris on the beaches and packed them in trash bags.

The “Drainage Cleanup/Restoration Along Saipan Western Shores” project aims to minimize nonpoint source pollution flowing into the lagoon and to eradicate the uncontrolled growth of algae at the drainages’ discharge points to the sea.

## CRM agencies to discuss Sugar Dock project tomorrow

Government agencies that compose the Coastal Resources Management Agencies will convene tomorrow at the Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in connection with the proposed Sugar Dock dredging and renovation.

The CRM office scheduled the meeting at the center beginning 9am, expecting it to draw a crowd opposing the Commonwealth Port’s Authority’s choice of Sugar Dock for a new Saipan-Tinian transportation system.

Some Saipan residents who attended the public hearing last Dec. 22 had requested for the venue so that community members could witness the meeting. CRMO permit manager Becky Cruz Lizama also disclosed that there would be another public hearing on Saipan on Jan. 27.

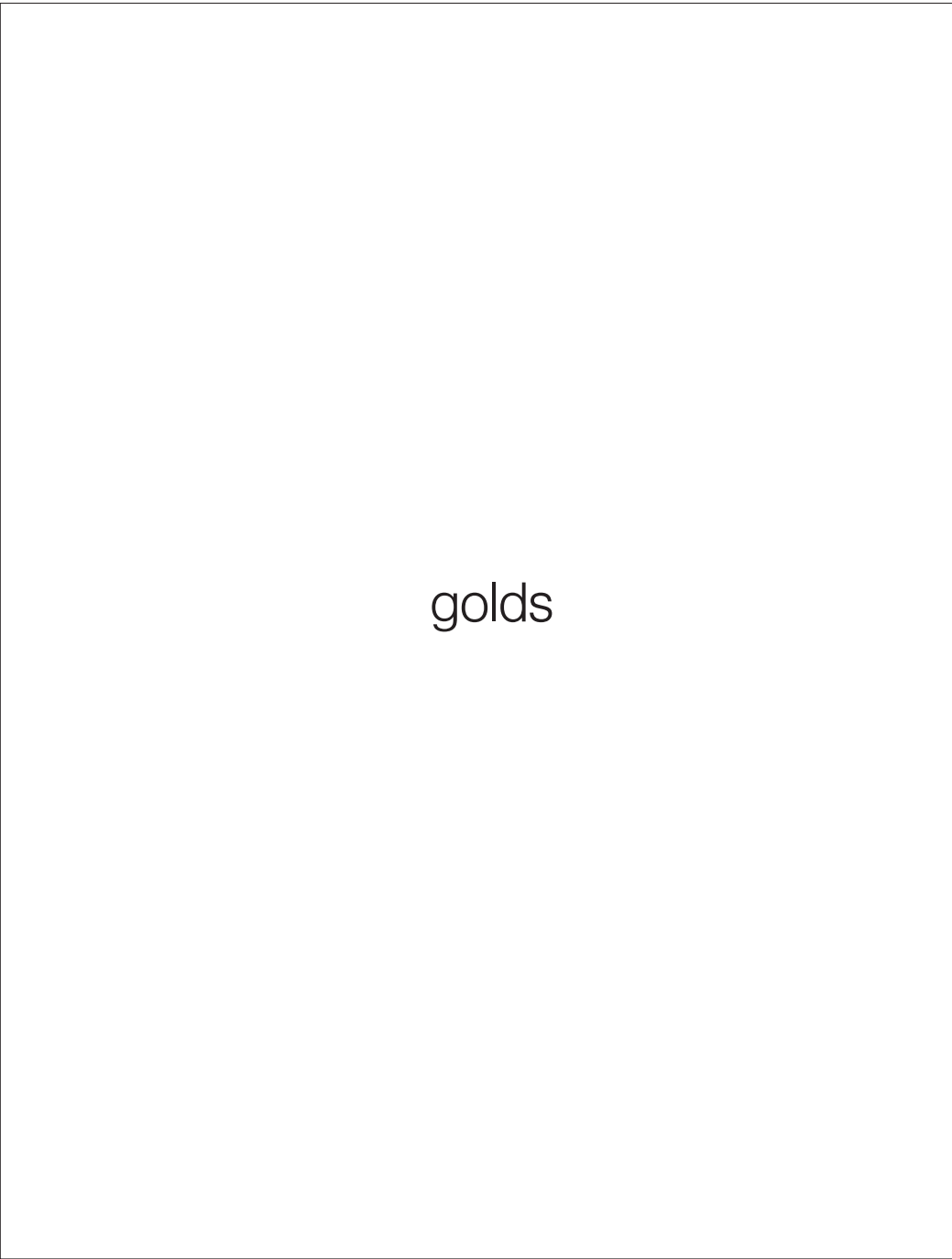
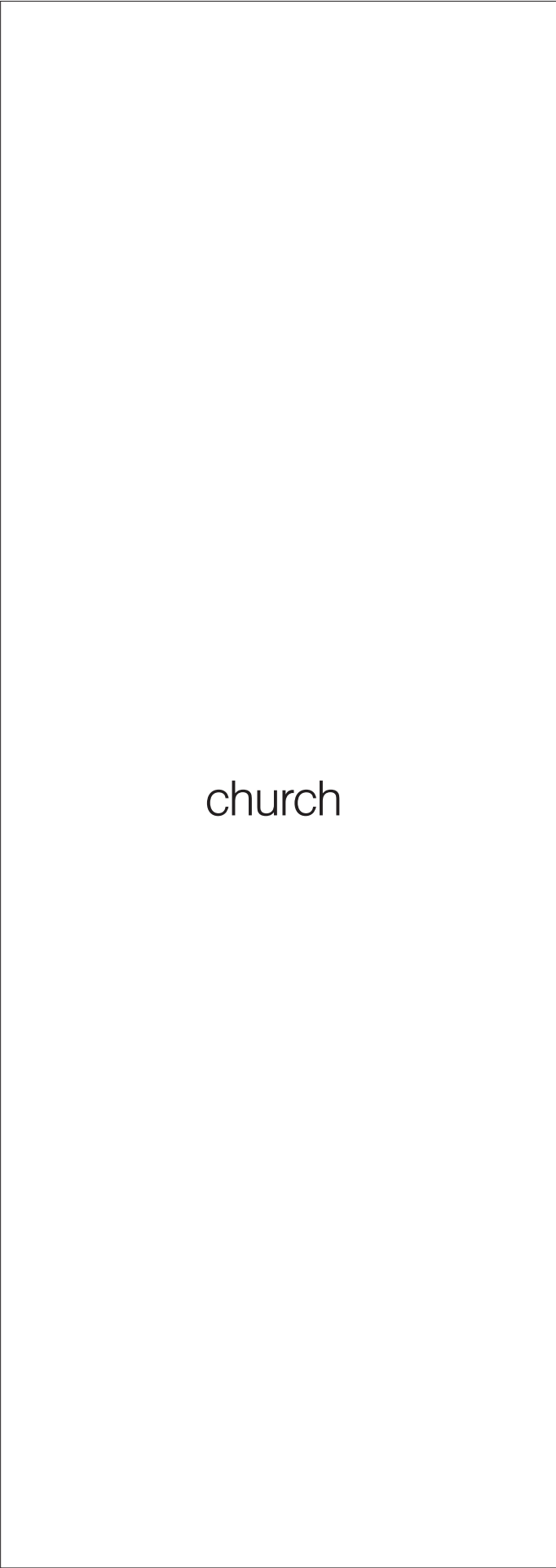
The CRM agencies include the CRMO; the departments of Public Works, Lands and Natural Resources and Commerce; Historic Preservation Office; Commonwealth Utilities Corp.; and the DEQ. They have until Feb. 2 to decide on the CPA’s permit application regarding the Sugar Dock and Tinian Harbor improvements.

During the first public hearing on Saipan, scores of community members opposed the use of the Sugar Dock for the CPA project, citing their affinity to the place and the potential adverse impacts to the environment—including the possibility of severe erosion at the area and nearby beaches and the alteration of marine habitat.

The CPA and consulting firm Micronesia Environmental Services defended the proposed project, saying the Sugar Dock and nearby beaches even expanded due to sand accretion despite the dredging of some 40,000 cubic yards of material dredged from the dock in 1990. The proposed project entails the dredging of some 20,000 cubic yards of material, according to them.

Tomorrow’s meeting also lists other projects with pending

permit applications on the agencies’ agenda, including the planned renovation of the World Resort Hotel. *(John Ravelo)*



CancerSurvivormeeting

Date : January 19, 2004

Day : Monday

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: Hyatt – Watabe Room

# CUC hires private engineering firm

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has hired an independent engineering firm that would help it attract international utility partners. According to the utility firm’s board of directors, the Harris Group starts work today.

Board chair Herman P. Sablan announced that the engineering firm will guide the CNMI utility from start to finish. Advertisements will be issued in February to attract competitive, global energy firms to the CNMI.

“We hired this independent firm to begin the job right now—writing a highly technical scope of work that attracts the best of the best in global energy producers to partner with our utility, bringing Saipan customers and commercial firms reliable electricity at the cheapest costs.”

The public utility would pay the Harris Group \$103,000 for complete services. CUC executive director Lorraine Aldan Babauta is the Contract Manager, having full authority to receive proposals and work with the Harris Group, assigning technical staff and signing contracts.

Realizing that worldwide business losses today lead to universal and highly aggressive, competitive, confrontational, and even callous challenges, coupled with the CNMI’s historic legal battles and procurement protests, the CUC is instead protecting the people from prolonged projects and legal clashes while also promoting the future market for safe business investments within the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sablan said the Harris Group will first develop a critical scope of work that involves the current and future energy requirements for Saipan based on various economic factors or clients and their potential use of electricity.

“This obviously requires research with economists, recent or previous public bids and contract protests; and finally, it is paramount that all technical aspects are conceived, including type, size, maintenance costs, and comparative analysis just in preparing the Scope of Work. Our board and executive director take credit for realizing and acting to get help at the beginning,” Sablan explained.

The Harris Group will next receive all proposal packages and guide the CUC in proper evaluations that include diverse aspects: ethics, methodology and basis of the points-system, comparisons to the scope of work, conflicts of interest, design technologies, maintenance costs, and ultimate rates as the public utility joins in partnership with a global firm that pays for the power plant construction, operates and manages the plants for the people of Saipan, meeting all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requirements and the Clean Air Act.

Sablan said the executive director and the board think progressively and are acting at the forefront to ensure electric generation supply as the economy improves and new housing developments and homesteads require that extra power is installed prior to the demand.

The Public Utility had only two firms apply for the advertised job; both were competitive, and it took the Selection Team all of September conducting telecommunications-interviews, verifying experience and credentials, and filing reports and evaluations to the Director. After this process, the team completed its assignment, signing off the final evaluations in October and forwarding the contract to the board of directors.

# Construction of Rota judicial center begins

Not too long from now, the CNMI judiciary will no longer be homeless on Rota.

The Commonwealth’s magistrates took off their robes Wednesday, put on safety helmets, and hefted shovels to break ground at the site of the future Rota judicial center in Sinapalo Village.

“Over four years ago during one of our meetings with the justices, I brought up the idea of a permanent home for the judiciary here on Rota,” said CNMI Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan.

“We have been moving from one place to another, like one of those homeless people that we see in big cities. We do not know when to be called or where to be sent next. It was a lesson in humility,” he added.

Demapan recalled assigning the High Court’s Associate Justice John Manglona to seek out funding for the judicial

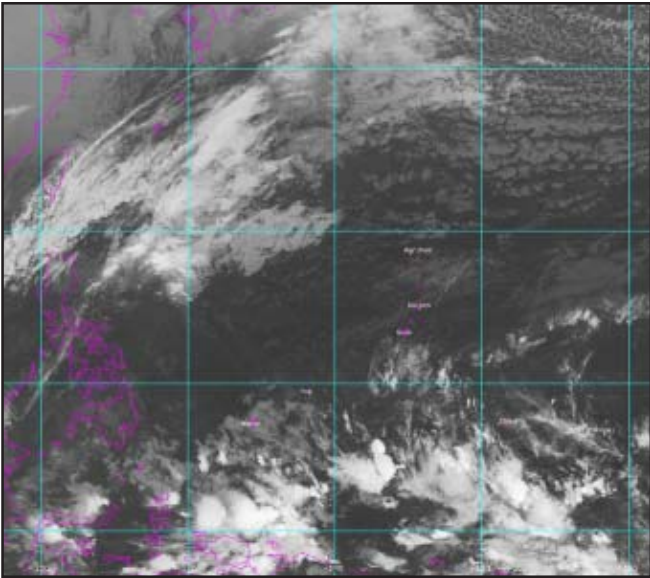
courthouse. According to Demapan, Manglona then approached then Sen. Ed Maratita, who brought the matter up with the Rota legislative delegation and the island’s mayor.

The chief justice said Rota’s lawmakers and chief executive realized the significance of putting up a courthouse on the island, which would create a landmark that epitomizes justice.

“They realized that foreign investment and economic development always cry out for a stable justice system where rights are protected and a reliable forum for vendors is readily available,” Demapan said.

Capital Improvement Project monies will fund the construction of the Rota judicial center. Rota officials and lawmakers, among others, attended the groundbreaking ceremony. *(John Ravelo)*

## WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M., JANUARY 18, 2004  
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across much of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands... Within 100 miles of a line from 1n145e to 4n151e to eq160e to 2n170e to 9n177e. A cold front stretches from 24n180 to just southeast of wake island at 18n167e...then continues as a shear line to a point south of Guam near 9n144e. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are occurring along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary. A more concentrated area of heavier showers is found southeast of Guam between 9n and 12n from 145e to 147e.

**SAIPAN AND TINIAN**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10-15 mph.

**GUAM AND ROTA**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10-15 mph.

**PALAU**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast 10-15 kt.

**POHNPEI**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** East at 10 kt.

**YAP AND ULITHI**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast 10-15 kt.

**KOSRAE**  
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.  
**Winds:** East at 10 kt.

**CHUUK**  
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** Northeast at 10 kt.

**MAJURO**  
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.  
**Winds:** East at 15-20 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Sunny	72F (23C)	58F (14C)
Beijing	Cloudy	31F (-1C)	14F (-10C)
Hong Kong	Cloudy	69F (21C)	58F (14C)
Honolulu	Sunny	79F (26C)	67F (19C)
London, England	Partly Cloudy	45F (7C)	32F (0C)
Los Angeles	Sunny	73F (23C)	51F (11C)
Manila	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	71F (22C)
Melbourne	Sunny	80F (27C)	58F (14C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78F (26C)	66F (19C)
New York City	Sunny	28F (-2C)	22F (-6C)
Osaka	Cloudy	34F (1C)	19F (-7C)
Paris	Snow	41F (5C)	28F (-2C)
Pusan	Snow	41F (5C)	28F (-2C)
Rome	Partly Cloudy	46F (9C)	38F (3C)
Salem, Oregon	Showers	50F (10C)	42F (6C)
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	57F (14C)	47F (8C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	33F (1C)	14F (-10C)
Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	38F (3C)	27F (-3C)
Washington, DC	Sunny	32F (0C)	24F (-4C)



# Cohen: National Guard can be included as IGIA issue

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior David Cohen is open to the idea of including the CNMI’s bid for a National Guard unit as an issue for the Interagency Group on Insular Areas.

In an interview with reporters Friday, Cohen said the IGIA—the entity formed to guide U.S. insular areas and territories on federal policies and programs—would be glad to assist Gov. Juan N. Babauta in his efforts to create the CNMI’s own militia.

“We know that the governor has made that a priority. He is pursuing that with the Defense Department. He hasn’t formally

asked us to make that an IGIA issue. Of course, it’s not something that we have the power to decide. But if he wants to make it an IGIA issue, we’d be happy to work with him on that,” he said.

Cohen was a part of a delegation led by Interior Secretary Gale Norton and U.S. lawmakers that visited Saipan last week.

Calif. Rep. Richard Pombo, who was head of the congressional delegation that spent over a day on Saipan partly touring World War II sites, had also pledged his commitment to support the CNMI’s National Guard efforts.

Although the provision that would have provided funding for this endeavor was dropped from the fiscal year 2004 defense appropriation measure, the chairman of the House Resources Committee said the issue is not yet dead and he would support such a measure should it be placed before his committee again.

In offering his assistance, Cohen said the IGIA could initiate meetings with relevant agencies to make them aware of the CNMI’s concerns on this issue.

“We wouldn’t have the authority to actually ask the program to be funded. Again, maybe our role would be to

make sure that the relevant agencies get the information, get the door open to other federal agencies so that their concerns can be heard and then hopefully addressed,” said the deputy assistant secretary.

President Bush reactivated the IGIA on May 8, 2003. The group has been established under the Department of the Interior and is chaired by the secretary.

An executive order signed by Bush enumerated functions of the IGIA including, among others, to provide advice—to the president and the Secretary of the Interior—on the implementation of policies concerning American

Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the CNMI.

The group is also tasked to obtain information and advice concerning insular areas from governors and other elected officials in the insular areas (including through a meeting at

least once each year with such governors of the insular areas who may wish to attend) in a manner that seeks their individual advice and does not involve collective judgment or consensus advice or deliberation. (*Marian A. Maraya*)

***Note: with mug of Cohen***

di na kasya

napa

+blue

yellow

# Crime Stoppers laud 24 volunteers

By EDITH G. ALEJANDRO  
REPORTER

The NMI Crime Stoppers handed out medallions and gifts to volunteers who assisted in the recently held 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Crime Stoppers Softball Tournament that culminated Saturday.

Crime Stoppers vice president Rod Klinge, coordinators Eric David and Tom Blas Jr. handed the Crime Stoppers medals to Joe Mettao, Tom Camacho, Paul Camacho, Jerome Dela Santos, Noemau Mobel, Brian Adelbau, Ben Tagabuel, Gloria Moukey, Ray Palacios, Roque Celis, Roy Celis, Nick Castro, Frances George, Agnes Ripple, Nancy Ripple, Annie Klinge, Shirley Blas, Tanya David, Jerry Ayuyu, Ned Norita, Wilgene Lietao, Michael Langdon, Frank Ilo, and Beck Palacios.

The volunteers acted as umpires and announcers, and performed other voluntary work

## KES to issue report cards

The Koblerville Elementary School will distribute second quarter report cards on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 2:15-4:30pm.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, teachers will issue report cards only to parents and legal guardians unless written consent is provided by the parents for a representative to pick up the report card.

“If you are unable to pick up the report card on Thursday, you may pick it up from the school office from 7:30am – 4:40pm on subsequent days,” the school said in a statement.

Furthermore, parents and guardians are welcome to attend the first semester awards ceremonies on Thursday, Jan. 22. Awards for students in A.M. Kindergarten and grades 1-3 will be distributed at 7:45am in the courtyard between Buildings B&C. Awards for P.M. Kindergarten and grades 4-6 will be distributed at 1pm in the school cafeteria.

during the three-day tournament that began Jan. 9.

“This is a get-together party for everyone in recognition of their helps and assistance during the tournament. We would like to applaud them for all their hard work and patience,” said Blas in an interview. The group gathered for the appreciation party at the Minachom Atdao in Susupe after the awarding ceremony.

The tournament was part of the January 2003 Crime Stoppers Month celebration, which was endorsed in Dec. 2003 by Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente.

“Internationally, Crime

Stoppers Month is January of every year. It is during the month of January when Crime Stoppers Programs all over the world conduct various events promoting their individual programs. This is usually accomplished through fundraising events and other activities that increase the public’s awareness of CrimeStoppers’ programs,” said the officers.

In 2003, the NMI Crime Stoppers Program held the first Crime Stoppers slow pitch softball tournament.

Over the past couple of years the NMI Crime Stoppers program has provided tips to law

enforcement agencies, helping bring in over 125 criminals. Law enforcement agencies have recovered over \$70,000 worth of stolen property and seized over \$30,000 worth of illegal drugs. Over 70 individual criminal cases have been cleared. The NMI Crime Stoppers Program has also paid out \$4,600 in rewards.

“We would like to thank you for your participation and support to the NMI Crime Stoppers Program and for helping us make the Commonwealth a safer place in which to live and for our visitors to enjoy,” said Crime Stoppers officials.

cars



# Saipan Tribune

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## EDITORIAL

### You know him by his labors

**T**he one who left wasn't the only one sleeping on a stained twin mattress under a carpet remnant in the room near the stench of sewage, wasn't the only one making shadows from a single light bulb dangling by a wire, who laughed at that old snoring dog, who liked to praise that dinner of beans and rice and chiles, not the only one who shared a torn loveseat to watch a fuzzy TV with so many brothers drinking beer and soda and sisters getting married and having babies, that crowd of aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces, not the only one with unfaded scars and bad teeth, not the only one who complained about that so-loud radio always somewhere, not the only one who could pick out the best used retread tires. He wasn't the only one loving a mother who wore that same housedress and apron, warming tortillas in the morning and early evening, who was still a beautiful woman.

He was the one who left and he will never stop loving her either. He had to leave behind a wife. The one who left had to leave behind his children. It was as though where he was going was a distant uncle's place, a man not blood, on his father's side, or it was the ex-husband of his godmother. Somebody close to somebody else, somebody known but who is not in the family. That rich man has a successful construction business, or is a landowner, or he is just from "the States." He is the one many have seen drinking, laughing, talking loud in his language. He wouldn't live in even the nicest house in Mexico.

In "the States" there is work that pays and that is what the one who left needs and wants and he knows how to work, he is not afraid of any work, of earning. He is the one who left and he met good people, and bad people, and it was always dirty and mean, the same clothes no matter where or when or what. And that rich man does have lots of work. The one who left sweeps the sawdust and scrubs the cement and masonry tools and coils the hoses. He stoops low for the cinder blocks and he lifts a beam that has to be set high. He pushes the wheelbarrow and pounds spikes with a flattened waffle-face metal hammer and he pulls out pins with its claws. He hauls the trash scraps and he digs the plumbing trench.

He always says yes and he means yes. He is a cheap wage, and he is quiet because he is far from home, as paperless as birth, and he not only acts grateful, he is grateful, because there is always worse at home.

The one who left is nobody special, and he knows it himself.

There are so many others just like him, hungry, even hungrier once they've been paid. His only home is work and job. His only trust, his only confidence, is the work, the job.

The one who left lives near streets in the States that were the first and are now the last. He shops at markets where others who left go.

He does not go to banks but of course he wants to. He does not have a driver's license but of course he wants one. He does not have a phone but of course he wants one. He wants his family to be with him.

He learned early to live like a shadow watching a single lightbulb and now he moves with almost a natural invisibility, carefully crossing into the light of night, not really seen when he's working in the sun.

He is someone who left his mother to get work.

He left his wife to find work.

He left his children to get work.

His citizenship is not in Mexico or in "the States" but is at a job.

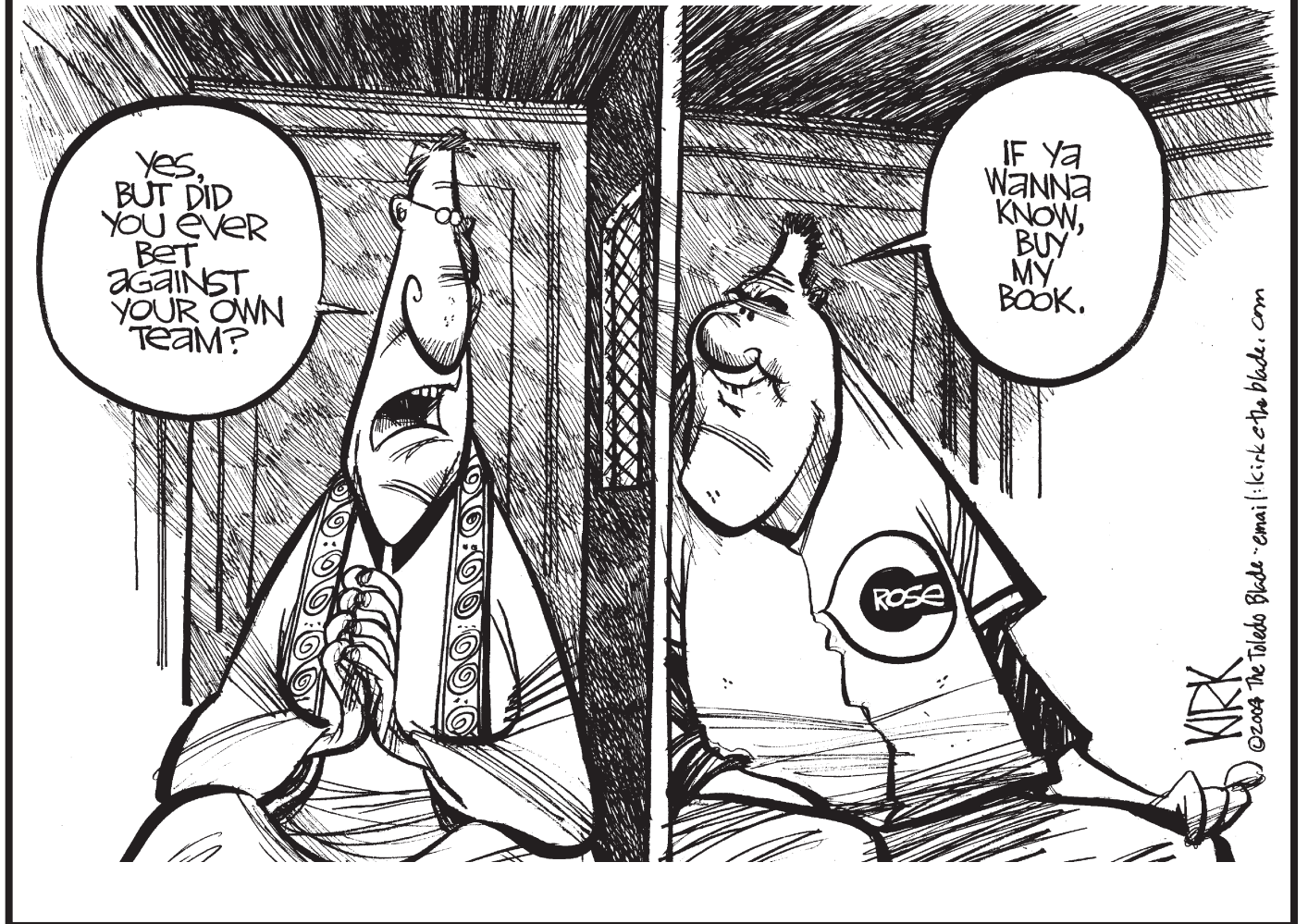
He is not a part-time citizen, a temporary citizen.

He is loyal to work, and he is a patriot of its country.

He does not want to leave it in three years, or in six years. Like everyone else, he wants to become wealthy in his country.

# Opinion

## CONFESIONS



## Motivation: It's so depleting

By LOUIS BAYARD

Special to The Washington Post

**I**gnored them at the bank. I snubbed them at the shopping mall. I banished them from the bedside table, the bathroom, the kitchen. Just when I thought I was rid of them, they burst like unleashed pathogens from new hosts: restaurant walls, church signposts, showroom catalogs. Something has to be done about them, I tell you, or I may sicken unto death.

I refer, of course, to Motivational Quotes. Those 10-cent soupcons of wisdom from the great and the not-so, exhorting us to throw off the weights of lethargy, strike out on the road to self-improvement and become the Olympians we're destined to be.

But what if your only destiny is to be hounded by Motivational Quotes? It seems as though they've stalked me from the cradle. I've tried throwing out the quote-a-day calendars, I've left the Reader's Digest unopened on the periodontist's table, I've set channel blockers against the Lifetime and Oxygen networks. But nothing has kept me from being waylaid by the forces of improvement. Now, in the most fiendish twist of all, they have colonized the vast and once-benign ether of the Internet. Don't believe me? Just try scrolling through the next e-mail you get from a trusted friend. Scroll ... scroll ... yes, keep scrolling ... riiiggghht ... there! See? At the end, just above the name and identifying data?

The Motivational Quote.

"He who would leap far must first take a long run" (Danish proverb).

Or "Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely" (Auguste Rodin).

Or "Difficulties are meant to rouse, not discourage. The human spirit is to grow strong by conflict" (William Ellery Channing).

Do I hear America groaning, or is it just me? Personally, I've had enough Motivation to last me several lifetimes. Not only am I unmotivated and unimproved by these apercus, @ I am increasingly skeptical of the people who wield them. If someone begins a sentence, "I think it was Montaigne who said ...," I immediately think two things: 1) This person has read about as much Montaigne as I have, and 2) maybe he's confused Montaigne with Lee Iacocca.

Because it doesn't really matter who supplies the Motivational Quote, or MQ. He (and it usually is a he) doesn't have to be a titan. He doesn't even have to be famous. Who, I ask you, is Earl Nightingale ("We must radiate success before it will come to us")? Or Norman Vaughan ("Dream big and dare to fail")? Or the running, leaping Dane who came up with that damn proverb?

If you have any doubt that we are facing a motivational epidemic, take a trip to your local gym. For me, the gym used to be a reliably

disheartening place where I could gaze on bodies more supple and attractive than mine and feel an agreeable sense of slippage. No longer. The gym-cum-spa where I currently sweat has a habit of posting MQs in unavoidable places—little drumbeats of sagacity, affixed over the water cooler. As if reading Abraham Maslow ("What a man can be, he must be") or Thomas Edison ("There's a way to do it better—find it!") could make the treadmill any less Sisyphean. As though the pensies of Samuel Johnson ("Your aspirations are your possibilities") or Henry Ford ("Don't find a fault, find a remedy") form a kind of protein shake for the soul.

It isn't so much the monotony that wears me down. It's the thought that anyone encountering these eminences for the first time would think they were put on Earth solely to get us through our lat pulldowns. Goethe, Seneca, Bill Gates, Emmitt Smith ... Everyone is enlisted in the long march toward buffness. My own revolt took place the day I stepped out of the shower and found Henry James admonishing me: "It's time to start living the life you've imagined."

I suppose the violence done to Henry James' spirit shouldn't really matter. MQs, like condos, are for the living. They are founded on the faith that our dreary existences can, with a well-timed nudge, be made worthy of even the most rigorous high-school-reunion inspection. But ask yourself. Is your life richer for Scandinavian sayings and the truisms of steel magnates or the tossed-off crumbs of Victorian essayists? Are we now a better people? Why haven't all the millions of desk calendars and motivational brochures and Successories posters eliminated poverty, racism, war, Paris Hilton? Why isn't each and every one of us leaving big honking footprints in the sands of time?

Could it be that, despite all the unsolicited inspiration we're getting from every side, some fundamental part of us remains ... unimprovable?

Well, maybe it's not so grim as all that. People, in their brief spans, do get better at some things (worse at others). Perhaps the time has come simply to put the self back into self-improvement, to see it as a private race with a fixed finish line that no amount of outside exhortation will change. Perhaps we can pass up the pat solution, the easy nostrum, and immerse ourselves, with gratitude, in the complexity, the unknowability, the sheer imperfectibility of our lives.

Perhaps we can live our questions now. And perhaps then, without even knowing it, we will gradually live along some distant day into the answers.

As Rilke once put it.

Louis Bayard is a Washington writer and author of the novel "Mr. Timothy" (HarperCollins).



## Letter to the Editor

*Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.*

## TRC or nothing for teachers

The election is a historical event for teachers and the CNMI. I have worked for many years and put in many hours to empower teachers with a “real” voice on the State Board of Education. With the Teacher Rep. being a non-voting member, he or she has been forced to hope that the concerns of teachers and recommendations of teachers on policies would be given the proper weight and addressed appropriately. The Teacher Rep. has been powerless as confirmed by ACT’s own representative, Mr. Keiper. If teachers truly want the Teacher Rep. to have a real influence in the decisions of BOE, collective bargaining is the only element of the Teacher Rep.’s authority that can “guarantee” teachers’ concerns will be heard and addressed. Only TRC is pursuing collective bargaining. Anyone in the community can present concerns to BOE but it will take collective bargaining to guarantee the concerns will be addressed. TRC is the first and only teacher organization structured to handle the problems facing teachers with a Teacher Rep. at all member schools.

I already have an excellent working relationship with the majority of BOE members. The new chairman, Mr. Roman Benavente, is one of the co-authors of my book *People & Villages*. The vice chairman, Mr. Dino Jones, sponsored a House Resolution in the 12<sup>th</sup> Legislature that recognized me for the work I have done in education. Ms. Frances Diaz has always supported the teachers and me when I was on the Board as acting Teacher Rep.

Regardless of the results in the election, I have already won. I am satisfied with the fact that I was able to prevent teachers’ rights from being violated any longer by ACT. I have been successful in empowering all teachers in a fair election with collective bargaining finally being the reach of teachers. I have accomplished what I set out to do; it is now up to the teachers to decide what they want: the same old nothing with ACT, or new beginnings with a brighter future under TRC.

I have also proposed to my counterpart “that whoever loses will recommend to the teachers they represent to join the winning group.” Teachers need to be united if collective bargaining is to become a reality. It would indeed be ironic and a step backwards for teachers should I lose but I care more about the final outcome for teachers than my own personal ego. I can only hope that teachers realize I am the best candidate when they vote. I hope they will remember it was I working with the Governor’s Office that got them to the voting booth in the first place. I also hope they will appreciate what I have done and what I’m trying to do for teachers. I must take this opportunity to thank the Governor and his staff, all the TRC teachers and Teacher Reps. for their support and help in being part of the solution—all teachers, one direction.

**Ambrose Bennett**

TRC candidate

## Consistent dialogue is the key

How would I deliver the services to the teachers?

If I am elected to the board, I will visit the schools on the island as well as in Tinian and Rota to meet with teachers and hear their concerns. I plan to ask each school to appoint a school representative who will attend monthly or quarterly meetings to share concerns and seek the best ways to reach solutions to such concerns.

The teachers’ rep is the representative of all the PSS teachers, and his role is to bring teachers’ concerns to the board meetings. Thus, the rep’s agenda would have to be those of our fellow PSS teachers here in the CNMI. That is one thing that I know I will always have in mind if elected—that the PSS teachers concerns are the same as mine and their agenda is mine, too.

My priority at this time is to establish a close working relations with the BOE and the PSS administration to ensure that they are apprised about the problems that teachers are encountering daily in their classrooms. We have to keep in mind that the PSS teacher’ rep does not have voting rights as the board meetings and the only way, I feel, that would gain us support of the board is to have someone that is willing to work with them, the PSS administration, and the teachers at PSS.

Teachers that I spoke to are concerned about several issues that affect them and their students. They are concerned about raising the reading level of their students, lack of instructional supplies in the classrooms, class sizes, employment contract, and salary increases. There are some concerns that I feel I need to further explore to see if they are a concern of the majority of teachers. And if they are, then I feel they must be brought to the immediate attention of the board.

As for my professional background, I am master degree holder, and I have been teaching in CNMI for about 15 years. I have taught at Marianas High School and Hopwood Junior High School.

**James Yangetmai**

ACT candidate

## Tun Martin, please

**I**t was a chilly February morning in 1968 at the 13th Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, when you spoke to those gathered to protest the War in Vietnam, on the one hand, and to advocate for the War on Poverty, on the other.

I was a young Third World country foreign student attending Graduate School in one of the prominent southern Universities at the time. We drove all day and all night from the Southwest to join the march that day. You and a group of prominent religious leaders led us from the Church not too far from the White House to the Arlington Cemetery across Washington Bridge.

As a foreign student, I was prudent enough not to participate overtly in a “political” activity. I brought a PRESS badge from my school paper and a handy SLR camera to take photos with so that I would not get in trouble with the authorities. Fear of physical assault and official reprisal from uniformed personnel were not unknown those days. Even the body language of locked arm-in-arm which you and the leaders adopted in front of the line, an awkward stance when walking a distance, spoke of the dread that physical harm might be visited upon the marchers.

You met some of the University Students informally and when we called you Dr. King, you said, “Martin, please.” Already prominent since your historic “I have a dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, it was almost epiphanous to meet you in the flesh. And to be told to call you by your first name like an ordinary Joe Black Smith was too much for this idolizing stripling from the Philippine Cordilleras.

That February day was my initiation to the Parliament in the Street which would later see me protesting a laundrymat close to the Hilton Inn on South Superhighway in Dallas, Texas that prominently displayed a sign: “For Whites Only.”

At the University, I would spend the lunch hour with a few University individuals, one of my professors included, standing by the quad flagpole with signs objecting to the war being waged in Vietnam.

A couple of months later in April, your voice was snuffed by a bullet while standing on a motel 2nd floor railing in Memphis, Tennessee. I remember the day well because I was in a car accident. While immobilized on my back at the University Hospital watching the news report about the various conflagrations that followed the shooting, my attending nurse came in, turned up the TV volume and declared: “Thank God, they finally got the Kneegah!” I would have flung the bedpan at her if I could reach it.

The previous summer, I walked a suburban friend to the Chicago Central Station after watching Zero Mostel delightfully frolic on stage in the “Fiddler in the Roof.” As we were walking, a Caucasian male grabbed me by the arm, flung me against the wall, and shouted: “What are you doing with a white girl, boy?” Though mentally aware of the pervasive incidence of racial tension particularly in Chicago, I was not prepared for the existential impact of this assault. It marked a turning point in my perspective and my

## Some fundamental questions about the space proposal

By **DAVID C. ACHESON**

The Washington Post

**P**resident Bush’s proposal of a huge manned flight space program, featuring a return to the moon, has the earmarks of a new spectacular generated by NASA to reawaken public enthusiasm and appropriations support from Congress. This is altogether premature and bypasses several fundamental questions that first need to be settled in a searching and objective fashion.

Among these questions are: What are desirable space goals for the United States? What are their benefits and costs? What are the best instruments with which to achieve them?

In such an analysis NASA should not be the principal investigator. It has too many conflicts of interest, too firm a bias toward the glamour and public relations of mammoth manned flight programs, too shaky a claim on public confidence after two shuttle disasters and the hollowing out of its safety culture. The questions that need answers are too fundamental to be answered by an implementing agency.

The National Academy of Sciences would appear to be the appropriate agency for such studies, by reason of its skills, reputation and detachment. Certainly one issue is whether NASA itself is not to some degree obsolete and its management badly in need of restructuring and new leadership.

Another question fundamental to any new space program is: When will the fiscal circumstances of this country be compatible with major new investment in space? Certainly the near-to-middle, deficit-ridden future won’t be conducive to our best effort. This question needs to be insulated from political judgment so far as practicable, if looming deficits are any indication of what we may

By **JAIME R. VERGARA**

*Vergara is a Social Studies 6th grade teacher at San Vicente Elementary School and occasionally writes as a guest columnist for the Saipan Tribune.*



behavior in matters of racial relations in the United States.

A country boy from rural Philippines whose images of the United States was nurtured by antiseptic broadcasts from the Voice of America that portrayed institutions of learning in the United States as bastion of civil liberties and haven of liberal learning, I was ill prepared to see a paranoid government and reactive school administrations see themselves under seized by a motley group of disorganized “radical” forces.

The then Attorney General John Mitchell came and spoke at the Law School of my University. In our appointed noon hour, as we stood with our protest signs by the flagpole at the quad, we were threatened by members and sympathizers of the John Birch Society whose “house” was not too far from the University campus at Highland Park in this Texas town propelled to global notoriety by the JFK assassination.

I dropped out of University that year and went to live in Greensboro, North Carolina, earlier site of the nationally prominent Montgomery Ward lunch counter anti-segregation protests. Moving to Greensboro was like jumping from the fire to the frying pan. Members of the Order of the Klu Klux Klan were not unpopular in the City. My warm-hearted Methodist upbringing naively had me driving College students to the former Cotton Mill towns to provide tutorial lessons to African-American children, and chauffeuring my bride to the newly started yet suspect Head Start program, totally oblivious of possible consequences to health and well-being.

I am not being sentimental here, *Tun Martin*, for these reminiscences. Nor am I trying to vicariously sponge off your reputation just because I had met you once. It is just that my off-island bank keeps telling me on the phone that it will be closed today in commemoration of your birthday, and I was reminded by your admonition that “living for a cause” was much harder than “dying” for it.

Our Commonwealth has yet to give you your commemorative day, but it is just as well. Though part of the American family, we shamelessly practice racial discrimination in this Commonwealth on land rights and employment, to the detriment of those not native to this shores. It would be a travesty to your memory to add one more layer of hypocrisy into our battered island soul.

Nevertheless, as for me and my house, thou shalt be known as *Tun Martin*, Sir!

expect of political judgment. Perhaps the General Accounting Office would be a good place to start.

Once these questions are answered, at least conditionally, there will be issues of technology to address. Are goals of scientific discovery best met by unmanned robotic spacecraft, requiring far smaller launch vehicles, far fewer dollars and far lower risks than manned missions?

It’s ironic that after extensive recent press coverage of the amazing feats of robotic spacecraft—Pioneer, Galileo, and now Mars rover—the weight of the White House comes down in favor of a blockbuster and budgetbuster manned program. But if the National Academy of Sciences should find persuasive benefits in particular manned flight projects, implementing the hardware development will be the next step. Experience with the shuttle teaches that simplicity and safety of design, economy of reuse and a responsive and simple contractor structure should be built in.

One benefit of deliberation in decision-making about the ends and means of the space program, besides waiting for a more favorable fiscal opportunity, is that materials for resisting stress and the heat of spacecraft re-entry are more apt to be available after 10 or 12 years than after four or five. This is one of the most critical issues in space technology, and haste will cause us to forgo badly needed opportunities.

In short, the president’s announcement forecloses the most important issues that need objective study and public scrutiny, insulated from NASA. These issues are far too important to be assumed away in the White House’s off-the-cuff decision.

*The writer was a member of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident in 1986.*

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# Compact grants upset officials

WASHINGTON—A ceremony planned for Monday in Honolulu was canceled after a dispute between Hawaii lawmakers and the Interior Department blossomed yesterday over the amount of money the state would receive to offset the cost of regional immigrants.

The Department of the Interior said yesterday Hawaii would receive \$10.6 million to offset the costs of Micronesian and Marshall Islanders who in 1986 were granted the right to migrate to the United States and its territories.

But the grant was only about a third of the estimated costs associate with providing social services to the immigrants last year alone, Hawaii officials said.

“Our state’s deficit in this area is still many times that amount,” said Sen. Daniel Akaka.

The Hawaii delegation learned late Thursday that Interior Secretary Gale Norton planned a ceremony to announce the grant in Honolulu Monday, blindsiding lawmakers. The delegation demanded and received a hasty briefing yesterday afternoon,

where they voiced their concerns about the allocations.

“Interior had to know we would be disappointed with this result,” said Rep. Ed Case. “We should have been involved in the development of those figures.”

Guam, Hawai’i and the Northern Mariana Islands were to share roughly \$30 million set aside in the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, signed into law Dec. 17.

Keith Parsky, spokesman for the Office of Insular Affairs, a policy arm of the Interior Department, said the money was divided based on census numbers of immigrants in each region from the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands.

“I’m mystified by all this,” Parsky said.

Guam, which has 9,831 immigrants, would receive \$14.2 million. Hawai’i, which has 7,297 immigrants, would receive \$10.6 million — significantly more than the \$2.9 million last year. The Mariana Islands received \$5.1 million Thursday for its 3,570 immigrants.

Two staffers from the Office of

Insular Affairs informed the delegation yesterday that they stood by the census numbers and the methodology used.

But provisions in the Compact-Impact legislation called for other tools—in addition to census—to be used when making calculations, lawmakers said.

Specifically, the law states that reports from each governor’s office estimating the impact of immigrants on their budgets could be used in the calculation. Gov. Linda Lingle, for example, estimated the effect on Hawaii was \$32 million last year.

Also, Interior could look to reimburse hospitals for services rendered to immigrants.

A comparative analysis could also have been done of all the assistance provided to the three jurisdictions. Guam, for example, received \$157 million in debt forgiveness in the Compact-Impact law for services provided to immigrants over the past 17 years. Case said that, too, should have affected how the grants were dispersed.

*(The Honolulu Advertiser)*

## SALAS

From Page 1

Commonwealth could not move forward with their operations because of the “sluggish” work permit approval process.

“Whenever you have a business thinking of coming into the islands and has gone through Labor and Immigration, submitted all documents, and it takes seven months to process, what you have done, in effect, is stop commerce,” he had said.

He revealed that he used to meet with 25 CNMI business owners every Wednesday to get acquainted with their needs.

“I know a lot of the businesses here are frustrated. And I have told the governor that we need to do something about this. It’s a big impediment. And it’s so frustrating because a lot of these guys come to the island as tourists. And their papers don’t get processed for months. They get impatient, they leave,” he pointed out.

Salas said he has seen first-hand the kind of information that the DOL requires in the processing of work permits.

“And I tell you, there’s no reason in the world for that thing to take longer

than 30 days. The way the system operates is totally unacceptable. The process takes too long and they need to fix it. And I’ve seen it. I’ve talked to them [DOL], and I hope they remember the conversation that we had,” he said.

Further, Salas had proposed to stop the “non-stop cycle” of consensual transfers among employees, saying this system is defeating the very purpose of the moratorium on the hiring of nonresident workers in the Commonwealth.

He said there are more nonresident workers coming into the CNMI through consensual transfers than through exemptions that are only granted by the governor.

“It’s a hemorrhage that needs to stop. It is dangerous for us to continue doing this. There will always be one person on island who will say: ‘Okay I’ll come and work for you, and I’m not going to follow my contract because I’m going to request a transfer, and file a frivolous lawsuit so that I can leave a \$300-job and get a \$3.05/hour-job,’” Salas said.

He added that this system also paves the way for “lousy employees” to remain in the CNMI and stay here for years.

The congressman said that legitimate employers needing workers

are deprived of the opportunity to hire because of these consensual transfers. In the meantime, those accustomed to hopping from one employer to another thrive on transferring and, in some cases, even end up bringing their entire family to the CNMI, one at a time.

He continued that the situation also decreases young local residents’ chances of competing for jobs, if pitted against experienced nonresident workers who go through consensual transfers.

Salas believes that finished contracts, unless renewed, should be honored and that the worker should go home.

The 11th Legislature enacted legislation—Public Law 11-6—that imposed a moratorium on the hiring of nonresident alien workers, while the Commonwealth reassessed its needs to employ alien labor.

The purpose was to impose a temporary freeze on the number of workers in the CNMI, with exceptions to new major tourist-oriented development and critical professionals.

Salas, who is called “the jogging partner” of the governor, will be the first to assume the deputy secretary position at the Labor department, which is headed by Secretary Jack Tenorio.

## CUC

From Page 1

total of 21 utilities organizations: 12 from the U.S. mainland and nine from the Pacific, including Hawaii and Guam.

Fox Lawson said that CUC’s pay administration practices (annual increase, salary structure adjustments, bonus plans) “are slightly below the market, but CUC’s benefits (holiday/ personal/ bereavement days, vacation leave, sick leave, and retirement contributions) are found to be “better” than other organizations.

The report said that “better” means that CUC is more generous or gives more expensive items in these areas.

Although CUC’s salaries can be considered competitive with the overall market, Fox Lawson said the data showed that there are several positions that are “significantly above and significantly below the overall market’s salaries.”

These factors, it said, may be attributed to the lack of a formal job evaluation methodology for determining appropriate salary rates for jobs at CUC.

Fox Lawson’s report, a copy of which was obtained by the Saipan Tribune, showed that among the positions that are “significantly below” the overall market are communications operator (-49.9 percent), compliance and safety officer (-43.1 percent), trades technician (-39.1 percent), legal counsel (-27 percent), meter reader (-19.3 percent), and trades foreman (-19 percent).

Those that are “significantly above” the overall market are IT specialist (32 percent), administrative support specialist (27.6 percent), water deputy assistant (23.9 percent), laboratory manager (21.6 percent), and Customer Service supervisor (20 percent).

The board’s majority voted on Friday to adopt the salary administration guidelines, classification manual, and the compensation study as prepared by Fox Lawson.

Of the seven-member board, only Tinian representative Allen Perez objected to the immediate implementation of the study, expressing doubts over the CUC’s financial capability to meet the needed adjustments.

Other board members, however, found the newly appointed Tinian member’s objection “ridiculous,” citing that the personnel matter is an urgent issue to ensure a fair and just compensation package for CUC employees.

Besides, members said that CUC spent too high a price if it will only ignore Fox Lawson’s findings now. The CUC paid the consultancy group some \$85,000.

Based on the Fox Lawson report, the board raised CUC’s entry annual pay from \$11,000 to \$15,000, among other actions.

Changes in personnel matters will take effect in April 2004.

Earlier findings by the Office of the Public Auditor show that CUC has inadequate personnel rules and regulations, and that its interim rules do not address premium pay or explain who should receive it and how it should be computed.

OPA also said that CUC’s manual provides no criteria for justifying exceptional performance ratings.

## TAN

From Page 1

accomplishments, the Chamber membership chose Tan to receive the prestigious award, which puts him in the ranks of a very select group of businessmen in the Commonwealth.

Tan expressed gratitude to all the Chamber membership for voting for him and said the award will further inspire him to do more for the Chamber, the Tan Holdings Corp., and the community as a whole.

“I’m very honored to receive the award. This will give me more energy and inspire me to do even more as a board member of the Chamber, and I’ll continue to do what I can to help the CNMI economy and the community,” he said.

He also expressed optimism over the state of the CNMI economy, citing pronouncements by leaders of the Chamber and the 14<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives to reach out and communicate with one another in helping revive the economy.

New SCC president Alex Sablan earlier appealed to the government and lawmakers to “use” the Chamber in crafting plans and laws geared toward jumpstarting the economy, while House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial had said that his legislative agenda would focus on four E’s—education, environment, essentials, and economy.

“Our CNMI economy is hopeful because I can see that [Sablan] is reaching out, asking the government to have a dialogue; I would like to ask Speaker Fitial to add one more E—engagement—we would like the Chamber to be engaged [with the government],” said Tan.

On the efforts of the government to entice new investors, Tan said he participated on behalf of the Chamber in the investment conference organized by the Office of the Governor in Tokyo, Japan, last year. “It’s going to take some time for anything to materialize with the new investors but I think that’s the right direction,” he said. “It’s not going to be easy to attract new investors; it’s going to take a lot of hard work and we’re doing just that.”

He pointed out, though, that more effort should also be given toward engaging and communicating with

existing businesses and investors.

“It’s not easy to develop any new industry so I think it is only right that we must try to maximize and ask ourselves if we have done enough to promote our existing industries—both the apparel and tourism,” he added.

At the same time, Tan stressed that it is not enough that the CNMI is competitive locally or even regionally but that it should be competitive globally “because the tourists have the whole world to travel to. We have to give them a reason to come to the CNMI.”

On a lighter note, Tan told the audience that he has been sick for the whole week and had to literally drag himself from bed just to attend Friday night’s event. “But I can’t complain, right?” prompting laughter and scattered applause.

According to a bio provided by the Chamber, Tan oversees the “non-apparel” companies for Tan Holdings Corp., which includes the Century Group of Companies and numerous others. Tan Holdings Corp. is a diverse holding company, which does business in 14 industries in the Western Pacific.

He is vice president & director of Asia Pacific Hotels, which owns the Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach and Guam Dai-Ichi Hotel. He is also president and CEO of the CTSI Logistics Group, a company founded on Saipan, which today has offices in 19 countries. He is a director of the Luen Thai Group, a global conglomerate specializing in apparel manufacturing, logistics services and software development.

Active in community service on Saipan, Tan is president of the non-profit Tan Holdings Foundation, a director of the NMI Chapter of the American Red Cross and co-chairman of this year’s “Club 200”, president of the Saipan Bowling Association, and president of the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

Born in Hong Kong, Tan grew up on Guam and Saipan and has been a resident of these islands for the past 28 years. He was valedictorian of Barrigada Jr. High and JFK High Schools on Guam, and graduated magna cum laude from University of Guam with double majors in Accounting and Management.

He and his wife, Lydia, and their daughter live on Saipan.

## CNMI

From Page 1

include the chief executives and key officials from Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the CNMI.

“I’m looking forward to attending that meeting and having the opportunity to raise our concerns here,” said the governor.

Meantime, Babauta expressed great appreciation for the visit to the CNMI last week of U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Gale Norton and a congressional delegation headed by California Rep. Richard Pombo.

“We had a very fruitful, very beneficial visit. The secretary participating in the [American Memorial Park] ground breaking [and] signing the grant means a lot. Just being here in the CNMI means a lot,” he said.

Norton, during her visit Friday signed a \$5.1-million Compact impact fund for the CNMI. The amount represents the CNMI’s share in the \$30 million Compact impact payments for

this year. The whole appropriation will be shared with Guam, Hawaii, and American Samoa.

This year’s allotment is the highest the CNMI has ever received as compensation for the costs associated with the migration of Micronesians to the Commonwealth.

Babauta, meantime, said that Norton is “very interested in the history of the CNMI.” During her brief stay, she toured various World War II sites on Saipan. She also visited the UIC garment factory in San Antonio.

Babauta said that he had invited Norton to visit some schools on Saipan, particularly Mt. Carmel High School and Calvary Academy, but her schedule was too tight to do so.

“I had really wanted her to visit Mt. Carmel but because of the very tight schedule, she was unable to visit those schools,” he said.

Babauta was unable to come to a proclamation signing at Mr. Carmel last Thursday for its Catholic Schools Week due to conflict of schedule.



# Business

## Saipan’s biz chamber installs new officers

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Hundreds of people trooped to the ballroom of the World Resort Hotel last Friday to witness the installation of the 2004 officers of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, in a glittering ceremony



**Sablan**  
Alex Sablan, Saipan Shipping Company’s marketing and administration manager, formally assumed as the business organization’s new president. He, together with other chamber officials, were sworn in by Superior Court Associate Judge and honorary member David Wiseman.

The chamber also honored Tan Holdings Corp.’s Executive Vice President Jerry Tan as its Business Person of the Year. Tan also sits as director on the Chamber’s Board.

Norton expressed her appreciation for being able to speak to the CNMI’s premier business organization, telling the crowd that she, together with a six-person congressional delegation, had a fantastic visit to the Northern Marianas. “It is such a wonderful place, we were greeted with tremendous hospitality.”

She credited the chamber for its help in setting up her brainchild, the Investment Development Conference, which was held in Washington D.C. in September last year. She outlined some of the progress that’s been made in the aftermath of the conference and announced plans of hosting another one in the near future.

Norton had to immediately leave soon after her speech as she had to catch a flight to Guam, where the delegation was to proceed next. Gov. Juan N. Babauta left with her, leaving Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente to represent the administration at the installation dinner.

Besides Sablan, the chamber’s new roster of officers includes Richard A. Pierce, who was sworn in as vice president; Larry Knecht, treasurer; Jay B. Jones, secretary; and the Board of Directors: Charles V. Cepeda, Juan “Pan” T. Guerrero, Tan, Michael J. Schadeck, and Kanae S. Quinn.

In his remarks, Sablan expressed optimism over the state of the islands and urged continued dialogue with all sectors, particularly the government, as a way to keep the flow of collaboration and positive change moving forward.

“What we need is dialogue.

We have offered and I continue the tradition of our past presidents. To our elected leaders, please use us, continue to include us, and let’s have the transparency that has been

assured to the whole community and let’s grow our once vibrant economy and community of years past,” he urged.  
Sablan said the CNMI must

strive to compete in the region by using all the benefits of the Covenant, the CNMI Constitution, and the Commonwealth, but also sharing the spirit of regional

cooperation in the areas of health, education, and natural resources.  
He urged everyone to embrace the two economic engines that run the Commonwealth: the tourism

industry and the garment industry. “Why do we have policies in place that seek to destroy their existence. If we continue to dwell in the past  
See SAIPAN on Page 10

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oh yeah  
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# Fitial outlines House's legislative agenda

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The four E's of education, environment, essentials, and economy will form the pillars of the 14<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives' legislative agenda in the next two years, with the final E—economy—the backbone on which the other E's would rest, according to House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial.

Fitial outlined his legislative agenda before members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during the installation ceremony for the group's new officers Friday evening at the World Resort Hotel in Susupe.

According to the new House leader, implementing immediate improvement in these four areas would go a long way toward achieving his vision of a Commonwealth with a thriving economy, where people have good jobs that pay good wages, and where every child has access to a world-class education.

"I am sad to say that we are worse off today than we were when I first put forward my 4 E's plan. The Commonwealth is undergoing great change, just like the rest of the world economy. You've experienced several years of belt tightening and challenge. The CNMI government has not kept up with

your sacrifices. We have a lot of work ahead of us to strike a balance," said Fitial.

He said this is also a time to mature, to be willing to accept and welcome change, and a time of opportunity if everyone in the CNMI has the stamina, perseverance, and faith that "together when can get it right."

On education, the House speaker said this is the essential key toward good paying jobs, entrepreneurship, and a higher standard of living. "We need to increase educational opportunities for all children—and all adults—in the CNMI. We cannot seriously say we care about our future if we do not make a common commitment today to educating our children."

Fitial described the responsibility of protecting the environment as everyone's responsibility, not only for the enjoyment of people today but also for future generations. "I do not think that means we should not enjoy or use it, but we must be mindful that future generations deserve the opportunity to enjoy nature's beauty as much as we do."

On the matter of essentials, Fitial said this includes the C o m m o n w e a l t h ' s

infrastructure—transportation, water systems, and public service delivery models. He pointed out that, although these are things considered vital to each one's daily life, they sometimes get overlooked.

As for the economy, Fitial said this is where he is more familiar with, and the final E on which all the other E's depend on. No improvement can be done on the other E's so long as the economy is in shambles, he said.

"The economy is the area where our local government has failed us the most. It seems the government's answer for our financial crisis is to raise taxes. My friends, you and I know that raising taxes hurts economic development. It kills jobs. And when we kill jobs, we reduce the number of taxpayers," he said.

Fitial quoted former British prime minister Winston Churchill, who said: "For a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing on a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

"It doesn't work. The government is trying to lift the handle and the bucket isn't moving anywhere," he argued.

Among the steps that could



Fitial

## Interior to host another investment confab

By JAYVEE VALLEJERA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced that her department is planning to host another investment development conference in Washington D.C., this time with the participation of the freely associated states.

Norton disclosed this in her remarks before the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during the group's installation dinner at the World Resort Hotel last Friday evening. It was the Interior Department that organized the 2003 Investment Development Conference in the nation's capital last Sept. 2003. At that time, only the insular areas of the CNMI, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa participated.

"We want to work on another conference and have that involve the freely associated states as well. We want to follow up on the prospects from the last conference. The conference we had before was widespread;

we'd like to have the next one be closely targeted, based on our experience from the last conference," said Norton.

The freely associated states include the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Norton did not specify any dates for the next investment conference.

The Sept. 2003 conference attracted some 500 different business groups. They were given a view of the various investment opportunities in the insular areas by speakers that included businessmen from the insular territories themselves such as former SCC president Jay Jones and Marianas Visitors Authority chair David Sablan.

The Interior Secretary said they are now following up on some prospects that arose from that conference, such as the cruise industry and getting international students interested in enrolling here in the CNMI.

Norton said she is optimistic



Norton

of tremendous developments for the Commonwealth in the horizon. Based on what she has seen and observed, she said the CNMI has much to offer. "As the Chamber of Commerce, you have a great job ahead of

you and you have three things to build on: You have a long history and tradition of productivity and enterprise; you have a strong international trade connections; and you have so much in terms of the tourist industry."

Norton also highlighted the many improvements in the garment industry, saying the controversy that used to hound the apparel sector in the 1990's is now "largely behind us."

"With the improvements that are still being made, I think that things are looking very good; I've been hearing from other federal officials that so much progress has been made and I think that is very encouraging," she added.

be done to turn the economy around, Fitial said, are:

- Reforming the business licensing and permitting processes;
- Creating tax incentives to encourage new industries that are less labor intensive, that will help diversify the economy;
- Forming public-private partnerships to market the CNMI's economic advantages to potential investors;
- Working with the U.S.

Congress to make sure that the CNMI gets its fair share of federal assistance, including grants and business programs.

Fitial also pushed for more open dialogue between the private and public sector, and more effort on the part of the government to nurture existing businesses on the islands.

The diversification of the CNMI's tourism industry by tapping into new markets was also highlighted, with Fitial saying that

everyone has to get rid of any pre-conceived notions and prejudices for this to succeed. "We must do so [opening up tourism market] with the same warm hospitality we've shown other visitors."

In an apparent broadside to allegations that the House now has a "special interest" leadership, Fitial said all businesses are his special interest. He encouraged businesses to go to his office and offer suggestions on how to grow the economy.



JAYVEE VALLEJERA

Judge David Wiseman swears in the Chamber's new officers. From right, Wiseman, Michael Schadeck, Kanae Quinn, Jerry Tan, Richard A. Pierce, Alex Sablan, Juan T. Guerrero, Jay Jones, and Charles Cepeda. Not in photo is Larry Knecht.

## SAIPAN

From Page 9

for mistakes made on both sides of the table, we accomplish nothing. We have it in our power to change hearts and minds but we, as leaders, must have the political will to accept responsibility. Fix the problem and move on."

Friday night's installation dinner was a who's who of the leading political and business personalities in the Northern Marianas, with newly inaugurated House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial giving the keynote address.

Other notable guests who attended the affair were Marianas Visitors Authority

deputy managing director Vicky Benavente, Reps. Oscar M. Babauta, Ray Yumul, Janet U. Maratita, and Claudio K. Norita, Duty Free Shoppers-Saipan president Marian Aldan-Pierce, and Office of the Insular Affairs field representative Jeff Schorr.

MVA chairman Dave Sablan acted as master of ceremonies.



# Nation

## Plane carrying nine crashes in Lake Erie

### Mother delivers last of sextuplets

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.** (AP)—A woman pregnant with sextuplets has given birth to the five remaining babies more than a week after delivering the first, a hospital official said Saturday.

The four boys and two girls were three months premature.

Amy Van Houten delivered four babies Friday and one Saturday morning, Spectrum Hospital spokesman Bruce Rossman said. All were in critical condition, weighing between 1 pound, 4 ounces and 2 pounds, 1 ounce.

The babies' names are Gerrit Calvin, Samantha Clair, Nolan Benjamin, Peyton Scott and Kennedy Alexis. John Paul, who was born Jan. 7 and weighed 1 pound, 8 ounces, also was

listed in critical condition.

"The Lord just blessed us abundantly," said father Ben Van Houten, a 29-year-old machine builder. "Six little wonderful darling children that from (our) perspective seem to be really healthy. From the doctor's perspective, they're in critical condition."

The mother, a 26-year-old teacher, was in fair condition but tired, the hospital said.

Van Houten used fertility drugs to become pregnant. She and her husband learned of the pregnancy in September, and the mother has been hospitalized since early December on bed rest.

Complications after multiple births often involve the proper formation of the heart, lungs and brain.

**SANDUSKY, Ohio** (AP)—A single-engine plane carrying nine people crashed Saturday in snowy weather shortly after taking off from an island in Lake Erie, the U.S. Coast Guard said. There was no immediate word on whether anyone survived.

The pilot radioed a frantic call for help shortly after taking off, but controllers then lost contact with the plane, Coast Guard Lt. j.g. Christopher Pasciuto said.

A helicopter found the wreckage about 7:30 p.m. Saturday

about a mile west of Ontario's Pelee Island, Pasciuto said. The crew did not immediately see any signs of life, he said.

The helicopter was unable to land because of safety concerns, Pasciuto said. Ice has formed on Lake Erie, but the lake has not iced over.

The plane was bound for Windsor, Ontario, across the border from Detroit, and crashed about 20 miles north of Sandusky.

Officials with the Canadian Coast Guard, the Ontario Provincial

Police and Transport Canada—Canada's equivalent of the Federal Aviation Administration—did not immediately return calls for comment.

The region has been locked in bitterly cold weather, with temperatures in the 20s Saturday in northern Ohio. The water temperature in Lake Erie, where waves were running 3 feet to 5 feet, was about 33 degrees.

Bob Wernecke, a pilot who flies between Ohio's resort islands just south of Pelee Island,

said he made six flights during the day before deciding about 5 p.m. that the low cloud cover and freezing rain had made conditions unsafe.

"It's nasty," he said by phone from Put-In-Bay. "It's freezing drizzle, kind of bad."

Located in the western Lake Erie basin between Cleveland and Detroit, Pelee Island and Ohio's Lake Erie islands are popular summertime destinations but lightly populated in the off-season.

## More cows of infected Canadian herd found

**KINGMAN, Kan.** (AP)—While farmers tried to boost consumer confidence shaken by the country's first case of mad cow disease, federal agriculture officials announced they had tracked down five more animals from a herd of Canadian cattle that included the infected Holstein, slaughtered in Washington state.

The finding brings to 19 the number of cows located from the 81 head of Canadian cattle that entered the country in 2001.

Also in Washington, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it has found prohibited animal tissue in feed from six Canadian animal feed companies since the mad cow discovery last month. The discovery is significant because it may help investigators trace the source of infection.

Feed tainted with tissue of an infected animal is the most likely means of spreading mad cow disease, a fatal brain-wasting illness.

Mad cow is a concern because humans can get a related illness, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, from eating contaminated meat. That concern prompted countries to close their borders to American beef last month.

Also Friday, top agriculture officials from the United States, Canada and Mexico failed to reach agreement in Washington, D.C., on reopening their borders to beef products and live cattle.

The United States has been pressing Mexico, a large market for American beef, to lift its total ban on U.S. beef and cattle that was imposed last month after scientists diagnosed the U.S. case of mad cow disease.

Canada wants both the United States, its biggest trading partner in cattle and beef, and Mexico to lift restrictions that took effect after the Canadian mad cow case in May.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said no decisions were made about resuming trade.

## FDA: Generics cost less than meds from Canada

**WASHINGTON** (AP)—Americans who buy drugs in Canada in hopes of saving money could pay significantly more for certain medicines than if they had purchased generic versions at home, according to new research by the Food and Drug Administration.

Canadian price controls mean that brand-name drugs there can cost as little as half the U.S. price. Those potential savings are enticing increasingly more people to import drugs

from Canada even though the practice is illegal and the FDA calls it unsafe.

Generic versions cost much less than their brand-name counterparts, however, and the U.S. generics market is considered the world's most competitive. So FDA Commissioner Mark McClellan argues that for many people, buying more homegrown generics is a risk-free alternative to imports that could lower their drug costs.



# Bush speech to frame re-election agenda

By **TERENCE HUNT**  
AP WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

WASHINGTON (AP)—With the economy growing, the stock market rising and Saddam Hussein in custody, President Bush will frame his re-election agenda in an upbeat State of the Union address, arguing he has made America more prosperous and secure but still can do better.

Democrats have a ready answer: Bush has the worst job-creation record of any president since Herbert Hoover and misjudged what would happen in Iraq, where the death toll of U.S. troops reached 500 on Saturday.

Bush will step into the election-year debate Tuesday night with a nationally broadcast speech. It is wedged on the political calendar between Monday night's Iowa caucuses and the leadoff presidential primary in New Hampshire on Jan. 27.

Restricted by record budget deficits that blossomed during his administration and approach \$500 billion, Bush has little room to propose costly initiatives.

But he will urge Congress to make recently enacted tax cuts permanent over the next decade and will push for action to deal with the rising cost of health care, White House aides say. He will revive his contentious plan to allow younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in the stock market.

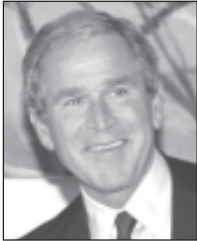
Bush is not expected to use the speech for tough talk on national security. He did that last year in laying out the case for war against Iraq; the year before he branded North Korea, Iran and Iraq an "axis of evil."

"We're fighting three wars simultaneously, in Iraq, Afghanistan and globally against terror," said Richard Haass, a former senior adviser to Secretary of State Colin Powell and now president of the Council on Foreign Relations.

"There's little appetite and little capacity for any new discretionary undertakings, so that places an emphasis on diplomacy vis-a-vis North Korea and Iran," Haass said. "We're simply stretched too thin—militarily, economically, diplomatically—to be lighting any fuses."

Bush used his weekly radio address to preview his speech.

"Over the past few years, America has been confronted with great challenges, and the American people have responded with strength and compassion and



Bush

## Clark hints at Bush's military service

PEMBROKE, N.H. (AP)—Wesley Clark suggested Saturday that questions remain about President Bush's Vietnam-era service in the Texas Air National Guard, but the retired general stopped short of endorsing a comment by actor-director Michael Moore that Bush was "a deserter."

Moore, a Clark supporter, introduced the Democratic presidential nominee at a campaign rally here by saying he looked forward to debates between Clark, if he wins the Democratic nomination, and Bush.

"I want to see that debate: the general versus the deserter," Moore said to enthusiastic applause at a packed rally in a high-school gymnasium, reiterating a line he uses frequently.

Clark, asked later by reporters if he agreed with Moore's characterization of Bush as a "deserter," said: "I've heard those charges. I don't know whether they're established or not. He was never prosecuted for it. The question in this election is can we bring a higher standard of leadership to America."

The exchange recalled a

controversy that was an element of the 2000 presidential campaign.

Bush served as a pilot in the Texas Air National Guard from May 1968 to October 1973, mostly flying F-102 fighter interceptors. He did not go to Vietnam.

Bush spent most of his time in the Guard based near Houston, but in May 1972 he received a three-month assignment in Alabama with the 187th Tactical Recon Unit in Montgomery while he worked on a political campaign in the state.

confidence," he said. "This nation is meeting its priorities, both at home and abroad."

He said the economy grew at its fastest pace in two decades in

the third quarter of 2003 and that more than a 250,000 new jobs have been created since August.

Yet, the nation still has a net loss of 2.3 million jobs since

Bush took office, Democrats said, and the president has failed to make health care more affordable and available for many Americans.

## Spirit takes microscopic images of Mars

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—On the surface of Mars, 300 million miles from earthlings, NASA's robotic rover Spirit extended its arms for the first time to snap extraordinary close-ups of the planet's rust-colored soil.

The images showed features nearly as small as the

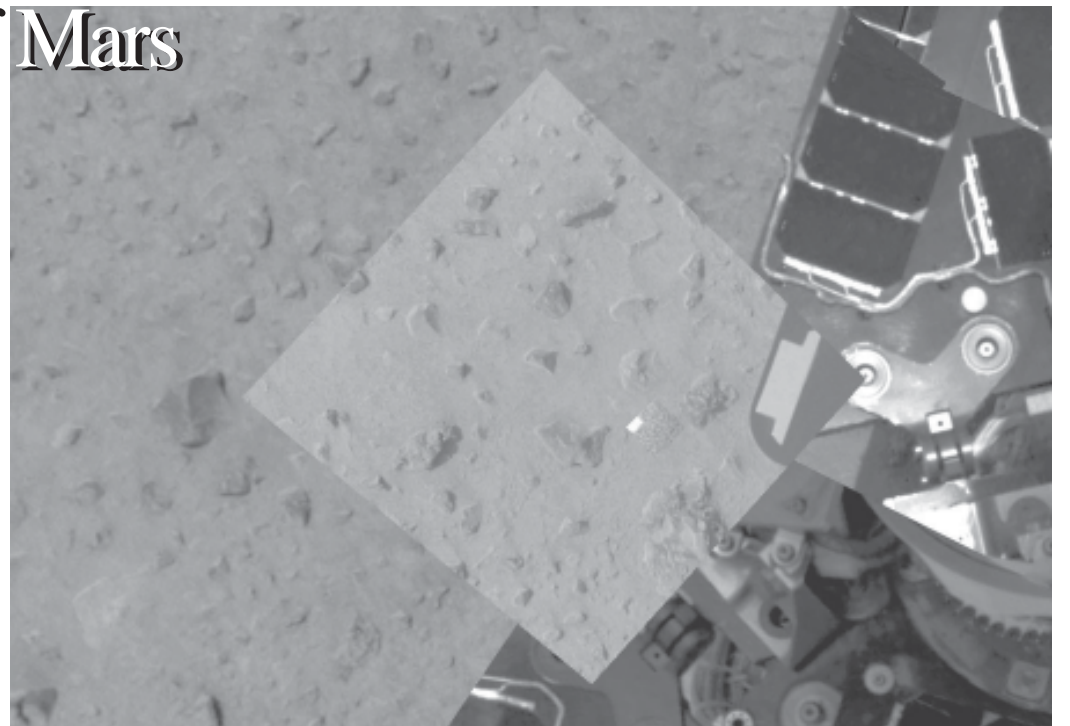
diameter of a human hair.

The new black-and-white images taken by the microscope-camera lens show a tiny area, 1.44 inches square, with clumps of fine particles that may be stuck together by the martian equivalent of Epsom salts.

"This is the highest resolution

by far we have ever seen Mars at," said Ken Herkenhoff of the U.S. Geological Survey, also the lead scientist for the microscopic imager on Spirit.

Images released by NASA during a news conference at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory include several taken by Spirit's fisheye,



AP

This composite image taken by the panoramic camera on the Mars Spirit Rover shows the first patch of soil examined by the rover's microscopic imager on Friday, Jan. 16, 2004.

hazard-avoidance cameras, which show the rover's robotic arm extended for the first time.

The arm, which is about the length of an adult human's arm, gave the rover broad reach to probe its immediate surroundings even while parked.

Spirit turned its attention to the silty ground beneath its six aluminum wheels within a day of rolling onto the planet's surface Thursday, 12 days after

arriving on Mars. Spirit should spend three more days parked beside its lander doing preliminary science work.

Scientists picked a pebble-free area to begin examining the soil that dominates the immediate landscape. Spirit landed in a region that is rich in dirt with a few rocks.

Tiny, ring-shaped features appear in the microscopic images that may be evidence of minute

amounts of water reacting with minerals in the martian soil, said John Grotzinger of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is a member of the rover science team.

Over the weekend, NASA planned for the rover to use two German-made instruments, its Mossbauer and Alpha Particle X-ray spectrometers, to analyze the minerals and chemistry of the martian soil.

## Northeast to warm slightly after chill

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—Record cold pushed power usage toward all-time highs around the Northeast, and utilities asked customers to conserve power as a precaution against blackouts.

Boston's Logan Airport hit minus 7 on Friday, the coldest mark there since 1980, and water from firefighters' hoses turned to ice before temperatures began creeping up. Temperatures warmed later in the day, as two Canadian weather systems that were funneling arctic air over New England moved

eastward and began sending the bitter cold out to sea.

"We're going to leave the bitter arctic cold behind and go with just normal winter cold," said Alan Dunham, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Taunton.

No major blackouts had been reported by Friday afternoon.

Electricity suppliers sought voluntary cutbacks to make sure that they had enough natural gas to run their generators and that their equipment didn't go down

from overuse. New Jersey Natural Gas Co. said natural gas use was 50 percent higher than normal on Thursday, and Con Edison on Thursday beat the record set just a day earlier in the New York area.

"People stay home more, turning on lights, watching television, listening to the radio or sitting at their computer," said Chris Olter, a spokesman for Con Ed. "In addition, you need electricity to power the pump that moves hot water, or the fan that blows hot air."

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# Business

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World

US death toll in Iraq reaches 500



AP  
U.S. soldiers from the 1st Armored Division take cover after descending from a Bradley fighting vehicle before a raid in a Baghdad neighborhood, in this June 28, 2003 file photo.

By PAUL GARWOOD  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**TIKRIT, Iraq (AP)**—A powerful bomb exploded under a U.S. armored vehicle in the cane fields north of Baghdad on Saturday, killing three American soldiers and pushing the U.S. death toll in the Iraq conflict to 500.

Reaching that threshold underscores the dangers still facing U.S. forces in Iraq as President Bush’s administration prepares to seek help from the United Nations in building a new Iraq, after shunning the world organization for months.

Two Iraqi civil defense fighters were also killed and two American soldiers wounded when the bomb exploded under their Bradley fighting vehicle. The group was searching for land mines and roadside bombs near Taji, about 20 miles north of the Iraq capital, 4th Infantry Division spokesman Lt. Col. Bill MacDonald said.

The blast flipped the 30-ton vehicle and set it afire, witnesses said. Three men fleeing in a white truck were detained, and soldiers found bomb-making material in the vehicle, MacDonald said. Residents

reported that American soldiers rounded up an undetermined number of young men as well.

MacDonald said the remote-controlled bomb was made up of two 155mm artillery rounds and other explosives. Hours afterward, young Iraqis pilfered bits of charred metal in a large crater left by the blast.

The military also said a U.S. soldier died from a non-hostile gunshot wound south of Baghdad. The incident occurred Friday evening near Diwaniyah, the command said in a statement. No further details were released.

The deaths raised to 500 the number of American service members who have died since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq started March 20. Of those, 346 died as a result of hostile action and 154 of non-hostile causes, according to Defense Department figures.

Most of the deaths have occurred since President Bush declared an end to major fighting on May 1. The death toll from the Gulf War, when an American-led coalition drove Saddam Hussein’s invaders from Kuwait in 1991, was 315.

In Afghanistan, 100 Americans have been killed, less than a third of them from hostile fire.

The deaths come as insurgents have shifted to using roadside bombs and hit-and-run tactics like the attack Saturday. A new troop rotation over the next four to six months will address that change, replacing heavy weaponry with high-tech, mobile fighting gear, a senior Army official said Saturday on condition of anonymity.

The change will also reduce troop numbers from 130,000 to 105,000 in the largest troops rotation since the World War II, the official said.

A military spokesman in Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, said troop morale remained high despite the rising death toll. U.S. officials say the number of attacks against coalition forces has declined sharply since November, in part because soldiers are using more aggressive tactics.

“I don’t think the troops have any doubt what their mission is,” Kimmitt said. “They know they have a nation that stands behind them. They know they have a

military that stands behind them ... I don’t believe that any arbitrary ... casualty figure is going to cause any soldiers to lose their will or lose their focus.”

But officials believe insurgents may be showing increasing sophistication. They have downed several American helicopters in recent months in some of their deadliest attacks, possibly even using shoulder-fired Soviet-made missiles like SA-7s.

Reaching the 500 threshold could again raise questions

among the American public about Bush’s Iraq policy as the U.S. presidential campaign picks up, analysts said.

“I think it’s symbolic in the sense that maybe a lot of people who have not paid attention in recent weeks ... will say ‘I thought that we were in much better shape than this,’ and ‘What’s going on?’” said Lawrence J. Korb, vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations and assistant secretary of defense under former President Ronald Reagan.

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### BIKINIS ON ICE

90 women and 90 men of all ages throw up snowballs while they brave the cold in bathing suits, during a photo happening on snow, launched by a French Fashion house, on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2004, in the center of Lausanne, Switzerland. For the photo shooting "Bikini on Ice", arranged by the fashion house to present its new springtime/summer collection catalogue, around 30 cubic meters of snow had to be transported from a Swiss alpine resort to Lausanne in the western part of Switzerland. In return for their services the amateur models could keep their bathing suits.

AP

## Thousands protest France head-scarf ban

By ELAINE GANLEY  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**PARIS** (AP)—Waving the French flag or wearing it as a head scarf, thousands of Muslim women marched Saturday through Paris, the center of a worldwide protest against France's plan to ban head coverings from public schools.

From Baghdad and Beirut to London and Stockholm, protesters condemned the law as an attack on religious freedom. Even in the West Bank city of Nablus and in the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir, Srinagar, women came out to support French Muslims.

"Where is France? Where is tolerance?" the crowd chanted during the four-hour march through Paris. "The veil is my choice."

The protesters want to scrap a bill that will go before French lawmakers next month forbidding "conspicuous"

religious signs, from Islamic head scarves to Jewish skull caps and large Christian crosses, in public schools. Easy passage is expected, and the law is to become applicable with the new school year in September.

President Jacques Chirac says the aim is to protect the principle of secularism that anchors life in France. However, it also is seen as a way to hold back the swell of Islamic fundamentalism in France's Muslim community—the largest in Western Europe at an estimated 5 million.

Protesters, from small girls to women, formed a sea of color in fanciful scarves of all sizes in Paris. Bearded men, some in long robes, also joined in the Paris march. A small group set out a prayer mat and prayed.

"Faith is not conspicuous," said one of hundreds of banners. "Neither Fundamentalist nor Terrorist but Peaceful Citizen," read another.

Police said up to 10,000 people took part in the peaceful march in the French capital, while several thousand others protested in a half-dozen cities around the country.

Critics of the law claim it will stigmatize France's Muslims. French authorities contend the principle of secularism is meant to make everybody equal.

"I think it will make things worse," Kods Mejry, 18, said of the head scarf ban. "There will be no more integration."

Her blue, white and red scarf matching the French flag was meant "to show that we are French and Muslim and proud of it."

In Washington, about 100 people protested outside the French Embassy; many were women wearing scarves. The crowd chanted "My scarf, my choice."

Demonstrators held signs that read: "Repressive Does Not

Equal Progressive" and "Is My Scarf a Threat to Democracy?"

In London, 2,400 people demonstrated near the French Embassy in the upscale Knightsbridge area. Waving placards, they chanted: "If this is democracy, we say 'No, merci!'"

"The government is isolating Muslims and setting a dangerous precedent," said Ihtisham Hibatullah, spokesman for the Muslim Association of Britain.

Nearby, a small rival group of about 30 demonstrators expressed support for the French ban.

British Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien said Britain's overnment supports the right to display religious symbols.

"In Britain, we are comfortable with the expression of religion, seen in the wearing of the hijab, crucifixes or the kippa," O'Brien said in a statement. "Integration does not require assimilation."

## Death toll rises in deadly Brazil rains

**RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil** (AP)—The death toll rose to 11 Saturday as heavy rains and mudslides pounded the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro for the second day in a row, a civil defense official said.

Six people died in mudslides or by drowning Friday, with five more weather-related deaths reported Saturday, State Civil Defense Agency spokesman Claudio Wanderlei said.

Among the dead were two children, both slum dwellers, who were washed away in a flash flood near a stream in northern Rio de Janeiro, Wanderlei said. Their bodies were found Saturday morning.

Mudslides swept away the rickety shacks of slum dwellers in at least three neighborhoods of northern Rio de Janeiro,

according to Wanderlei. He said one man was rescued from a swollen stream after clinging to a tree for five hours.

Some 470 families have been forced to flee their homes around the state, Wanderlei said.

"Fortunately, skies are clearing," he said. "We think the worst is over, at least for now."

The summer months of January and February are the rainy season in southeast Brazil. Deaths from mudslides caused by rain are common, especially in urban shantytowns where many poor live in shacks precariously perched on hillsides.

In Minas Gerais, the state neighboring Rio de Janeiro to the west, at least 14 people have been killed and 7,400 left homeless because of heavy rains since Dec. 15.



### Iran elections chief may cancel voting

**TEHRAN, Iran** (AP)—Iran's chief of elections warned Saturday he would not allow next month's legislative elections to proceed unless hard-liners retract their mass disqualification of prospective candidates.

About 80 reformist lawmakers took their weeklong protest against the disqualifications a step further Saturday, beginning dawn-to-dusk fasts.

The Guardian Council, an unelected body controlled by religious hard-liners, has triggered a political crisis by disqualifying more than a third of the 8,200 people who applied to stand in the Feb. 20 elections. State media controlled by the hard-liners say those disqualified fell short on the necessary criteria, but reformists say the move was political and intended to skewer the elections in favor of conservatives.

President Mohammad Khatami, a leading reformer, has condemned the disqualifications and warned he might resign if they were not reversed. And the European Union and the United States said the elections would lose credibility unless the disqualifications were overturned.

Iran's 27 provincial governors have vowed to resign by Monday unless disqualifications are reversed.

### US presses Palestinians on Oct. attack

**JERUSALEM** (AP)—U.S. officials are pressing the Palestinians to find those behind a deadly bomb attack on a U.S. diplomatic convoy three months ago, and warn that lack of progress may harm American aid programs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a Palestinian Cabinet minister said Saturday.

A senior Palestinian security

official involved in the investigation said no substantial leads have emerged.

A U.S. Embassy official, however, said "we're not entirely satisfied with Palestinian cooperation" with the probe into the Oct. 15 roadside blast that ripped apart a diplomatic car in the Gaza Strip and killed three American security guards. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there has been some progress, "but we want to see more."

Travel of U.S. officials to the West Bank and Gaza has been suspended since the bombing, an unprecedented attack on Americans in Palestinian areas since the outbreak of fighting more than three years ago.

### Nobel laureate to join Guatemala govt

**GUATEMALA CITY** (AP)—Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu said Saturday she will become one of new President Oscar Berger's top officials in charge of monitoring Guatemala's adherence to the U.N.-brokered peace accords that ended 36 years of civil war.

Meeting with the president's wife, Wendy Widmann de Berger, in the Guatemalan capital, the Nobel Laureate said she "would like to play this role and offer to Guatemala all the contacts of friendship that many communities have given me."

While Menchu's official role with the Berger administration has yet to be defined, sources close to the new president say she will become "goodwill ambassador to the peace accords."

The war pitted leftist, largely Indian guerrillas against a series of military regimes, many of which were backed by the U.S. government. The peace deal ended the fighting in December 1996, but not before 200,000 people had been killed.

## Diana crash witness has more information

**LONDON** (AP)—A woman who witnessed the car crash in which Princess Diana died has described the driver of a white Fiat she says was at the scene and behaving strangely, according to a Sunday newspaper.

The People tabloid quoted Souad Mouffakir of Paris, saying she had been in a car driven by Mohamed Medjahdi ahead of the princess's Mercedes in a Paris road tunnel. Medjahdi was quoted by a different newspaper on Thursday describing the accident and saying there were no other cars there.

Tests have confirmed the Mercedes carrying Diana and her companion, Dodi Fayed, had a brush with a Fiat Uno before crashing in the tunnel Aug. 31, 1997. It is not known to what extent it might have been involved in the crash. French police questioned almost 3,000 owners of Fiat Unos.

Mouffakir is quoted as saying the Fiat came up very fast alongside the car she was in, then slowed down so they were side by side.

She described the driver as in his mid-thirties, Mediterranean, "short because his

head was only just above the steering wheel," and with very dark brown, wiry hair.

"He had a very strange expression, like his mind was thinking about something else," she was quoted as saying. "I thought he was a madman."

She said she told Medjahdi to speed away and that "a moment later we heard the screech of tires," the newspaper said. She said she looked around and saw the Mercedes slide out of control, come toward them, then hit a pillar.

"I looked for the Fiat but it had disappeared. The Mercedes

must have gone out of control trying to avoid it," she was quoted as saying.

The newspaper said Mouffakir had remained silent since 1997 because she was afraid of being killed, but it did not indicate whom she feared.

It said she had split three years ago from Medjahdi.

He was quoted earlier this week as telling the Daily Mail newspaper, "there was no other vehicle in my field of vision. I saw no cars with the Mercedes, no photographers on motorbikes around the car. There was no one."



# North Korea says it showed nuke deterrent

## Afghan violence kills 4 suspected Taliban

**KANDAHAR, Afghanistan** (AP)—Four suspected Taliban fighters died when a bomb they were laying on a road regularly used by Afghan soldiers exploded prematurely, an official said Saturday.

Meanwhile, suspected drug smugglers fatally shot five Afghan soldiers, extending a wave of violence in southern Afghanistan since the ratification of the country’s first post-Taliban constitution last Sunday.

The bodies of four men were found on a road between Musa Qala and Sangin in Helmand province, some 70 miles northwest of the former Taliban stronghold of Kandahar.

Provincial government spokesman Mohammed Wali Alizai told The Associated Press that the men were carrying documents containing satellite phone numbers that showed they had links to the Taliban. He gave no further details.

“They were Taliban trying to lay a lay a bomb for the Afghan soldiers that often patrol this area,” Alizai said.

Four time bombs and two wireless sets were found near the bodies.

The incident came four days after a bomb in Kandahar city killed 15 Afghan civilians, most of them children, and a shooting in northern Helmand left 27 civilians dead.

The violence underlines the failure of U.S. and Afghan forces to crush the Taliban two years after their ouster, and threatens the timetable for summer elections under the new constitution.



### US seeks to encourage India, Pakistan

**NEW DELHI** (AP)—The United States is claiming no credit for the recent moves by Indian and Pakistani leaders toward resumed peace talks, but it wants to encourage them, an American diplomat said Saturday.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf agreed on Monday—during their first meeting in 2 1/2 years—to resume talks on the issues that have divided their countries for five decades, including the fractious dispute over control of divided Kashmir.

“We didn’t do it,” U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said in an interview on New Delhi Television.

“If we have been helpful, it’s because we were able to talk to both sides at moments of high tension,” Armitage said.

He attributed the breakthrough in two years of stalemated Indian-Pakistani relations to “the courage of Indians and Pakistanis.”

### China official fired after disappearing

**BEIJING** (AP)—The chief legislator of a Chinese province has been dismissed on suspicion of corruption—three months after he apparently fled investigators.

Sun Bingchen was removed Friday as secretary-general of the Standing Committee of the legislature of Shanxi province, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The northern province is a major industrial and mining region with 35 million people.

Sun, 60, was under investigation after complaints of unspecified “economic problems” during his earlier term as a provincial justice and prison official, Xinhua said.

It said Sun was last seen Sept. 28 leaving his office and getting into a taxi in the provincial capital of Taiyuan after investigators questioned him five times but didn’t detain him.

### Pakistan seeks 3 believed to aid al-Qaida

**ISLAMABAD, Pakistan** (AP)—Pakistani authorities gave tribal leaders a two-day ultimatum on Saturday to hand over three tribesmen believed to have sheltered al-Qaida terrorists near the Afghan border.

Troops meanwhile were hunting suspected al-Qaida militants or tribesmen who fired rockets Thursday at an army camp in the border area, which is a possible hideout for Osama bin Laden and other fugitives. The attack killed four soldiers and wounded five.

The Pakistani military came up empty-handed after launching a raid backed by helicopters Thursday to capture 15-20 suspected al-Qaida fighters who were believed to be hiding at three compounds in the tiny village of Kalosha, near the border with Afghanistan.

Searches of the compounds turned up nothing, and the three owners as well as the al-Qaida suspects eluded capture.

### Stress blamed for Japan princess’ health

**TOKYO** (AP)—Japanese Crown Princess Masako, who was hospitalized last month with a viral infection, said Saturday her health has deteriorated because of the pressures of royal life.

Masako, 40, has been forced to limit her royal duties in recent months because of poor health.

The popular princess was hospitalized for five days last month after she was diagnosed with herpes zoster, commonly known as shingles. Caused by the same virus that is responsible for chickenpox, shingles is usually not dangerous and is often induced by stress and fatigue.

“Since my marriage over 10 years ago, I have tried to do the best I can under huge pressure in an unfamiliar environment,” Masako said in a statement released to Japanese palace reporters and published Saturday in newspapers.

“But I have a feeling that (recent health problems) resulted from the accumulation of mental and physical fatigue during this time,” she said.

Masako said she needed to

rest so she could fully regain good health.

By JAE-SUK YOO  
AP WRITER

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—North Korea said Saturday that it showed its “nuclear deterrent” to an unofficial U.S. delegation that visited the disputed Yongbyon nuclear complex, which had been closed to outsiders since the North expelled U.N. inspectors more than a year ago.

A member of the delegation, which included experts and former government officials, said the five Americans were allowed to see everything they requested but it was not clear if the “nuclear deterrent” was a bomb. Delegates said they could give no further details until they reported to Washington.

The visit came amid efforts to arrange a new round of six-nation talks on ending the standoff over the North’s suspected nuclear weapons program, which Pyongyang says is necessary to defend the country against a possible U.S. invasion. A first round of talks in August ended without much progress.

“As everybody knows, the United States compelled the DPRK to build a nuclear deterrent,” North Korea’s official KCNA news agency quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

“We showed this to Lewis and his party this time,” the spokesman said, referring one of the delegates,

John W. Lewis, a Stanford University professor emeritus of international relations.

The delegates, who returned Saturday to Beijing, would not say how much time they spent at Yongbyon. Lewis said they met North Korean military, foreign affairs, scientific and economic officials but would not identify them or say what they discussed.

“We are a private delegation,” Lewis said. “We were not there to negotiate. We were not there to be inspectors.”

The delegation was the first group from outside the reclusive communist country to visit the Yongbyon facility since the expulsion of U.N. inspectors at the end of 2002.

hyatt  
inauguration

## Life &amp; Style

# Man behind recognition of Saipan's Scouts retires

By JEANNETTE RYDER  
THE NEWS GLEANER

## Liberator of Saddam Airport calls Northeast his home

Lt. Col. Scott Rutter finished his steak. Not just any steak. It was the "Melbourne, the big steak, the prime rib with the baked potato," he laughed.

The first thing he did when he returned to the United States was go to a steak house.

"In fact, it's kind of funny because we were (in Iraq) and, this is the truth, we would take a piece of paper and I actually drew (a picture of) what I wanted to eat," he said.

While drawing food was a side project for him, he never wanted to be an artist. "I wanted to serve my country. Initially, coming out of college, I wanted to see the world so I decided to take a three-year commitment in the army," he said.

Those three years led to 20 years of service. His service included commanding elite companies during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Rutter, a Northeast resident, led his 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division troops in the takeover of Saddam Hussein Airport.

"Being a battalion commander is the last form of direct supervision in the Army. The rest of them— my superior officers, the brigade commanders and division commanders— are more resource providers rather than combat command. Battalion commanders are fighting combat," Rutter said.

His brigade's mission was to destroy Iraqi forces along the access road into the airport so that the actual seizing of the airport would involve

less contact. The Iraqis "were expecting an air drop landing from an airborne unit," he said.

For three days, Rutter's brigade attacked the Republican Special Guard Unit until the brigade had secured the airport, renamed Baghdad International Airport. "I had the honor to announce to the free world that we had control of the airport," he said.

His troops were also given the mission to secure the perimeter of the Northeast side of the Baghdad. This included executing searches for car bombs. While most civilians were searched and sent home, Iraqi vehicles could be shot. Four of his soldiers died during this mission.

"It was very difficult for the battalion. I gathered the forces and I spoke to the leaders. I said, 'We're not animals. We're here for a purpose. And I realize it's about fighting for one another. I said, 'God help the individuals who did that.'" He continued, "Instead of bringing the morale down, it raised it up. But, again, we lost four great soldiers. Nothing can erase that."

The brigade was given orders to move into central Baghdad, where they began to rehabilitate it. They established a police force, had running water, electricity and many other accomplishments within 30 to 60 days.

They also patrolled Baghdad after curfew, killing any Iraqi individual with a weapon. "We were tough. And it was very important we didn't have people riding around with guns late at night," he said.

Though some were anti-American, Rutter found many Iraqis supported the United States' invasion. "In fact, they

were wondering if we were really going to carry it through, unlike the last time when we stopped and implemented UN sanctions. A lot of innocent people suffered because of those sanctions," Rutter said.

In his brigade, a total of 10 lives were lost. Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith was among them. Smith died protecting his troops and was nominated for the Congressional Award of Honor.

Thirty-five of his soldiers suffered injuries. Rutter hurt his back and needs physical therapy twice a week. "That's minor to the injuries my soldiers sustained. They deserve the recognition," he said.

Rutter, 41, retired Nov. 1. "The number one thing I miss are the soldiers I had the honor to command," he said. "This generation, the generation I've had the honor to command, the ages between 18 and 25, is unbelievable. There were fantastic acts of valor and heroism by what I call the Next Greatest Generation."

It has been difficult for him, not knowing exactly what is going on with his brigade. He feels like a relative living away at college.

"When you are a battalion commander and you depart, you aren't supposed to look back because there's

a new commander there. Out of respect for the position, out of respect for the rank, you leave," Rutter said.

While he keeps in contact with some soldiers by writing, he believes there needs to be some separation in order for them to work with the new commander. He looks forward to seeing them at their reunions.

Rutter's concern for soldiers does not end with his own troops. Camp Hovey in 1-9 Infantry Battalion Executive Officer and then the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division Operations Officer. His wife Jolienne moved to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to be only hours away from him.

They became close with the islanders and learned that about 60 citizens from CNMI served in the US Marine Corps in the WWII Battle of Saipan. Thirty of those were still alive. They never received recognition for this feat.

After a year of hard work, Rutter got the citizens recognized as Marines. He organized the ceremony, which was held on January 31, 2000, for the remaining Marines and their families.

A US Federal judge swore them in as Marines.

"It was just a great event, a part of history," Rutter said.

They received all of their deserved

medals. One was a Purple Heart with Gold Star, which was awarded to bedridden Corporal Dela Cruz on week before his death.

"This award could not have been obtained without the continued diligence and steadfastness of LTC Rutter," Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio of the CNMI said.

The Northeast resident is keeping busy. His schedule is filled with public appearances. He is the featured January speaker for Young Americans for Freedom. He's going to be a panelist at the Conservative Political Action Conference. He's been interviewed by newspapers, radio stations, and TV.

"Part of that feeling, needing to still serve, is still attached to me, so that's why I do public speaking, talking about the great soldiers. Not for myself but for the families still out there," Rutter said.

He hopes that troops will be cared for upon their return. "We need to take care of our own and make sure that soldiers, sailors, and airmen are taken care of and that the infrastructure is improved by increased funding now and not later," Rutter said.

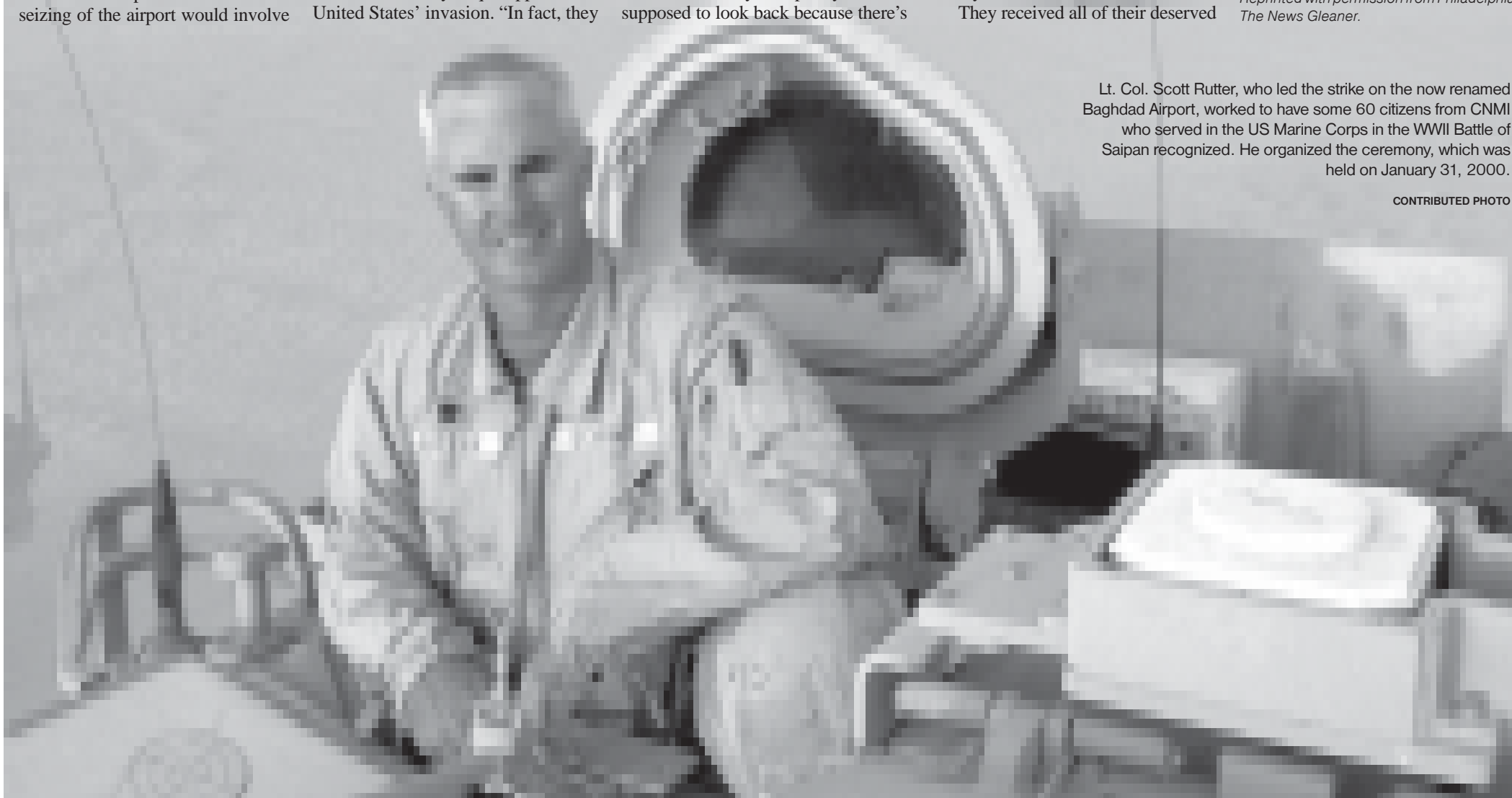
While Rutter has been recognized by the Flyers and the 76ers as hometown hero, he remains humble. The most important thing he wants to do now is reintegrate himself with his family. He will continue speaking while taking time to decide where his next mission lies.

"Life is good. Mission continues," Rutter said.

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Lt. Col. Scott Rutter, who led the strike on the now renamed Baghdad Airport, worked to have some 60 citizens from CNMI who served in the US Marine Corps in the WWII Battle of Saipan recognized. He organized the ceremony, which was held on January 31, 2000.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO





# Who will it be for this year's Miss CNMII?

By **EDITH G. ALEJANDRO**  
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Beauty Pageant Association presented Thursday the six candidates in the 2004 Miss CNMI pageant slated to be held on March 20 at Hotel Nikko Saipan.

The NMBPA presented to the media former Miss Teen CNMI Gina Duenas, 2003 Liberation Day Princess Rayna Camacho, Leiana K. Ogumoro, Cassandra DLG. Fejeran, Valerie Ann M. Babauta, and Kenyelyn Arriola. At least four more contestants from the islands of Tinian and Rota are expected to be included in the magic 10 before coronation night.

These candidates would be vying for the crown when the NMBPA holds the coronation night on March 20. The candidates have been spending at least 50 hours a week to perfect their performances for the show.

The candidates would be competing for several awards including Best in National Costume, Best in Swimwear, Best in Long Gown, and the top three awards: Miss CNMI Universe, Miss CNMI-International, and Miss-CNMI South Pacific. Winners of the top three awards would represent the Northern Marianas in upcoming beauty contests this year.

**Gina T. Duenas**, the former Miss Teen CNMI winner in 2002, is 18 years old and hails from As Teo. Gina stands 5'5" and works as a Polynesian dancer at the Dai-ichi Hotel Saipan while studying at the NMC. She believes that the pageant would help her build her self-esteem and help the CNMI's beautification program.

②

② **Rayna Camacho**, 17, of Capitol Hill, is enrolled at NMC. She currently works as a receptionist at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. She believes that the pageant would help her interact freely with the CNMI's diverse community. She stresses that the contest is an opportunity to know other ethnic groups in the Commonwealth.

**Kenyelyn Arriola** is an 18-year-old lass from Chalan Laulau and stands 5'5". She says that joining this year's pageant would help her experience new things, including meeting new friends and new people. She believes that the pageant would help her do what the CNMI needs right now.

⑤

② **Valerie Ann M. Babauta** is 21 years old, also from San Antonio and an NMC student. This 5'4" beauty stresses the need to work with the CNMI's youth. She believes that joining the contest would give her the chance to do this. Valerie also said that the pageant would build her self-confidence and would help her discover the world.

**Cassandra DLG. Fejeran**, 20, of San Antonio, and currently enrolled at the NMC, stands 5'5" in height. She believes that joining the contest is a challenge and an opportunity that all ladies should accept. She encourages all other CNMI ladies to join the pageant. She wishes to become a role model that youths could emulate.

②

② **Leiana K. Ogumoro**, 18, of Capitol Hill, stands 5'4 tall and is currently a student at the Northern Marianas College. She hopes that by joining the 2004 Miss CNMI, she would become another Kimberly Reyes, who would represent the CNMI to prestigious events like the Rose Bowl Parade and the Miss World contest. She believes that it is both a challenge and an opportunity that should not be missed.



## Target of classmates' teasing needs someone on her side

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

**DEAR ABBY:** I am a girl in the fourth grade, and there are some mean people in my class. They're always making fun of this girl from China.

When I see them teasing her, I want to be nice to her—but I'm afraid if I am nice to her, they will make fun of me.

I am one of the cool kids. Abby, please tell me if I should be her friend.

TRYING TO BE NICE IN  
PENNSYLVANIA



*Dear Abby*

**DEAR TRYING:** You are an intelligent, compassionate girl. The time to be a friend is when somebody needs one, and your classmate certainly needs one now. One effective way to defuse this kind of harassment is to speak up and say that YOU don't think what the bully is saying is funny.

Another way is to tell your parents, your teacher and the principal what is happening. That girl is being harassed because of her race—and it is against the law for it to be ignored. So don't wait. Speak up now. I commend you for writing.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** I am a 38-year-old divorced mother of two boys, ages 12 and 14. My boyfriend, "Nat," is divorced and has no children. We've been dating for three years. He is my best friend, and we get along great.

I am very much in love with Nat, but he says he will never marry again. I try dating other men, but they don't measure up to Nat. It seems Nat could get along fine without me in his life. I don't feel the same. Tell me, Abby, what's his problem?

WAITING IN THE SOUTHWEST

**DEAR WAITING:** Nat doesn't have a problem. You do. You have fallen in love with a man who has made it clear that he is unwilling to make a commitment to you and the boys. I give him credit for being honest with you.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

**DEAR ABBY:** My co-worker's 20-year-old son recently committed suicide. His mother was a single parent and the young man had long-standing emotional problems.

We are a department of about 20, and all her co-workers felt heartsick for her. All of us contributed toward the funeral spray.

When the funeral arrangements were finalized, the information was e-mailed to only about half of us. The rest—including me—were not invited. On the day of the funeral, the "invitees" came to work dressed in dark suits. It was very awkward.

While it is true that a grieving mother is justified in doing whatever makes her comfortable, I feel my feelings were not considered at all. I am deeply hurt that my gesture of sympathy was unappreciated.

SLIGHTED IN NEW JERSEY

**DEAR SLIGHTED:** Get over it. Your co-worker lost her child. You seem to feel that because you weren't invited to the funeral you somehow lost face. A funeral is not a party. It's also not a social gathering. Your grieving co-worker wanted those people to whom she felt closest around her when she buried her son. She does not deserve to be criticized for it.

**CONFIDENTIAL TO "FEELING REVENGEFUL IN CLEVELAND":** In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday we remember today: "To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough, and morality enough, to cut off the chain of hate."

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

*To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)*

# SAG picks nominees outside the mainstream

By ANTHONY BREZNICAN  
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

**LOS ANGELES (AP)—**The Screen Actors Guild flashed some independence with its annual awards nominations Thursday, citing performers from outside-the-mainstream movies such as "The Station Agent," "Whale Rider" and "In America."

Other backslapping groups have mostly ignored those films in the acting categories, despite their widespread critical acclaim.

Meanwhile, the prestige pictures "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" and "Cold Mountain" picked up only cursory mentions for the 10th annual actors guild awards, set for presentation Feb. 22.

"Mystic River" and "The Station Agent" collected a leading three nominations each in the movie categories, including best ensemble cast.

Patricia Clarkson picked up bids for both supporting actress for playing an angry cancer patient in "Pieces of April" and lead actress in "The Station Agent" for her portrayal of a lonesome artist.

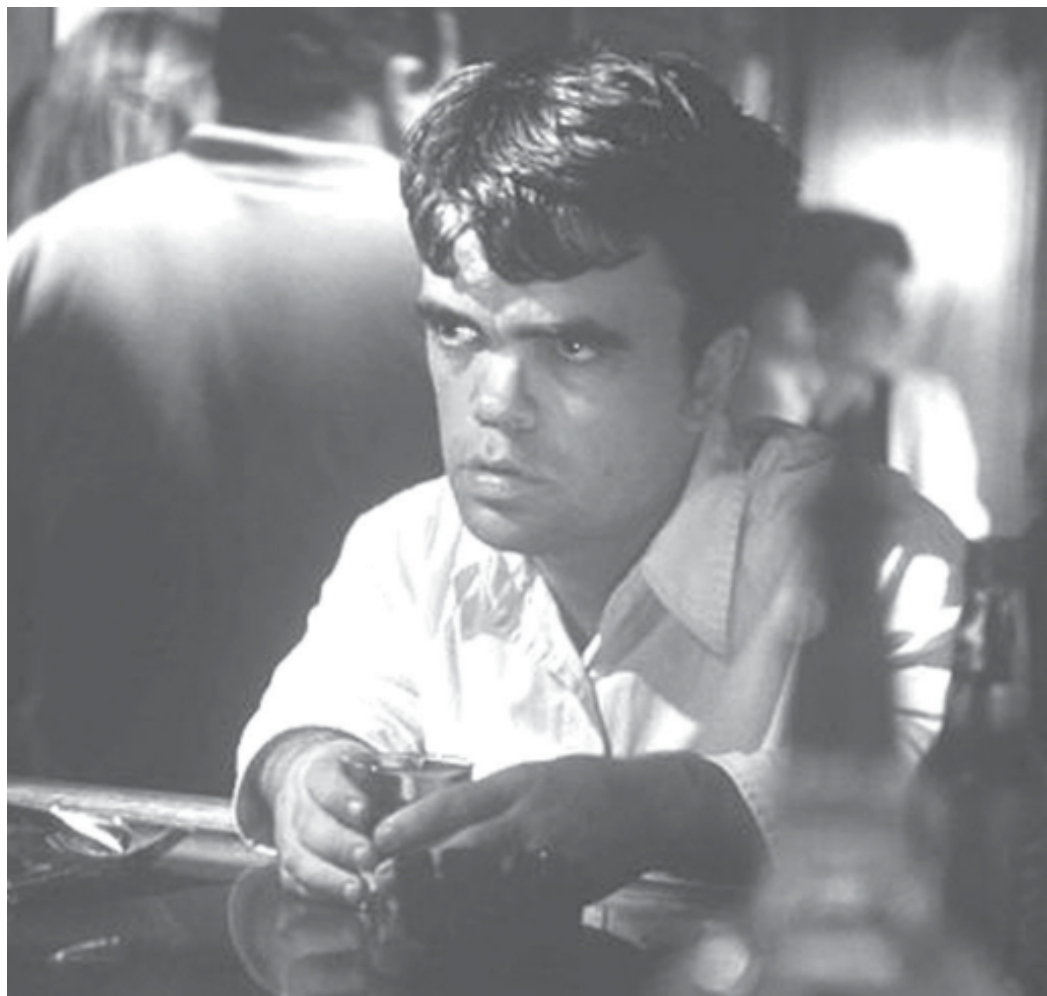
"It's been a journey with these two films and never in a million years would I have thought that I would be on quite this journey with them," Clarkson said. "It's just swingin'!"

Peter Dinklage—"The Station Agent" star (who was more widely seen last year as the bitter storybook author in "Elf")—received a lead actor bid. He played a misanthropic dwarf who makes friends despite trying to isolate himself at an old train yard.

Besides best ensemble—the guild's equivalent to a best picture category—"Mystic River" was recognized for Tim Robbins' supporting turn as the survivor of childhood sexual abuse who finds himself the suspect of murder and Sean Penn received a lead actor nomination for playing an ex-con.

Other ensemble contenders: "In America," "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" and "Seabiscuit."

It was the only mention for



Peter Dinklage appears in a scene in the 2002 film "The Station Agent," in this undated promotion photo. AP

the final installment of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, which is widely regarded as a front-runner for other major awards because of the accomplishment of the entire fantasy series.

Johnny Depp, a surprise Golden Globe nominee last month for playing a swashbuckler in "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," picked up another bid for that role from SAG—a significant boost for his Oscar chances.

Some big-name stars—Tom Cruise from "The Last Samurai," Russell Crowe from "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" and Nicole Kidman from "Cold Mountain"—were among those snubbed by the guild.

Besides Depp, Dinklage and Penn, the lead actor contenders were Bill Murray for "Lost in Translation" and Ben Kingsley for "House of Sand and Fog."

The lead actress contenders besides Clarkson were Diane

Keaton for "Something's Gotta Give," Naomi Watts for "21 Grams," Charlize Theron for her unglamorous portrayal of a serial killer in "Monster" and 16-year-old Evan Rachel Wood for "thirteen."

Chris Cooper, who won an Oscar last year for his supporting turn as a wildflower poacher in "Adaptation," was nominated for a SAG award in the supporting category for playing a plainspoken horse trainer in "Seabiscuit."

His competition besides Robbins: Alec Baldwin for "The Cooler," Benicio Del Toro for "21 Grams" and Ken Watanabe for "The Last Samurai."

Clarkson's supporting actress rivals were Keisha Castle-Hughes, the 13-year-old star of "Whale Rider," Maria Bello of "The Cooler," Holly Hunter from "thirteen" and Renee Zellweger for "Cold Mountain."

In the TV categories, HBO's six-hour adaptation of playwright

Tony Kushner's "Angels in America" collected six nominations in the TV-movie performer categories for Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, Jeffrey Wright, Mary-Louise Parker, Justin Kirk and Emma Thompson.

Although performers are the focus of the SAG nominations, Parker credited director Mike Nichols with the success of the play-turned-TV-movie, which touches on the subject of seraphim, AIDS, religion, politics and homosexuality.

"I can't believe he pulled it off," she said. "He so revered the text and so revered the play he was able to adhere to that while still taking risks with it."

SAG nominations are chosen by 4,200 randomly chosen members of the union. The guild's full membership of 98,000 is eligible to vote for winners. The guild's nominations are the last major nominations announcement before the Academy Awards nominations Jan. 27.

## Carter's mom arrested for attacking woman

**MARATHON, Fla. (AP)—**The mother of pop singers Nick and Aaron Carter was arrested for attacking the girlfriend of her estranged husband, deputies said.

Jane Carter, who separated from Robert Carter in March, allegedly broke a window to enter her husband's home and attacked the couple while they slept, Monroe County sheriff's Deputy Daniel Marquith said.

Jane Carter pulled 29-year-old Ginger Elrod out of the bed by her hair and beat her, Marquith said.

She was arrested for battery late Tuesday and taken to the Monroe

County Detention Center. Carter, 44, was released early Wednesday. An assistant to Carter had no immediate comment Friday.

The alleged fight took place after a Sunday meeting between the Carters and their son Aaron, which family attorney Scott Salomon said resolved their financial differences.

Last month Aaron Carter issued a statement alleging his mother took more than \$100,000 from his bank account without permission.

Aaron Carter, 16, younger brother of Backstreet Boy Nick Carter, has been managed by his

parents for 10 years. But he was no longer filing for legal emancipation to cut off his relationship with his mother, Salomon said this week.

It is not clear whether Aaron Carter, who lives in with his father, was present during the alleged incident.

Meanwhile, an entertainment manager is suing Robert Carter for libel and breach of contract. Eliot Weisman, of Coral Springs, sued in Broward County Court, seeking almost \$75,000 and management fees.

Weisman, 65, alleged he introduced the young singer's

parents to the William Morris Agency. Then Robert Carter cut him out of his 16-year-old son's growing career, Weisman said.

Weisman announced a business deal last May with Jane Carter to oversee Aaron's career.

"There may have been an agreement on Jane's part," Robert Carter said Thursday. "There was never agreement on my part or Aaron's part."

Jane Carter said Thursday that the lawsuit did not pertain to her. She declined further comment.

Carter's latest album, "Most Requested Hits," was released in November.



# Pastimes

**WONDERWORD®**  
By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

KEEPING IT STRAIGHT Solution: 8 letters

W	Y	R	T	E	M	O	E	G	D	F	R	A	N	K
D	A	A	L	V	E	N	L	N	E	I	O	I	D	X
R	Y	L	T	C	E	R	I	D	V	R	T	R	A	I
O	A	U	K	V	T	R	F	E	O	E	A	S	T	F
W	L	C	E	I	I	W	T	A	U	F	L	H	L	H
S	Y	I	L	Y	N	A	D	I	T	I	(K)	(O)	(O)	(L)
F	C	D	N	E	G	G	L	U	C	K	Y	N	P	M
C	L	N	I	E	A	E	E	K	B	A	P	E	E	E
K	A	E	W	T	A	R	I	L	L	O	L	S	A	A
C	I	P	X	I	R	R	Y	T	B	E	S	T	S	N
A	M	R	A	I	S	U	Y	I	T	A	N	S	Y	I
N	A	E	D	B	B	D	C	R	G	N	I	G	S	N
D	R	P	U	A	L	L	O	E	I	G	U	L	T	G
I	R	E	L	U	R	E	E	M	N	A	L	L	E	H
D	L	E	T	G	N	I	H	S	I	W	H	L	B	R

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Adult, Bets, Blunt, Boss, Candid, Canny, Capable, Claim, Clear, Devout, Directly, Draft, Easy, Envelope, Even, Fair, File, Fix, Flexible, Forth, Frank, Geometry, Hair, Honest, Length, Linear, Look, Loyalty, Lucky, Meaning, Meeting, Merit, Message, Perpendicular, Reliable, Rivet, Road, Ruler, Signs, Slick, Sword, Talk, Tidy, Tweak, Truce, Vertical, Wager, Walking, Wall, Wisdom, Wishing, Yield. Last Saturday's Answer: Prepared  
NOTE: Postage and handling charges have changed for The Collected Wonderword. Add \$3 for the first book ordered, \$1 more for each additional book. Volumes 17 and 18 are \$5.95 each, payable to Universal Press Syndicate. Send to WONDERWORD, 4320 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-6734, ext. 6613.

**CROSSWORD** By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Injection  
5 Calf's mother  
8 Unfortunate destiny  
12 Car  
13 — pro nobis  
14 Therefore  
15 Smooth-talking  
16 The other three  
8-letter answers, e.g.  
18 "Li'l Abner" cartoonist  
20 Chatters  
21 Amorphous mass  
23 Spanish year  
24 Carnival ride  
28 Footballer Aikman  
31 Indivisible  
32 Reach  
34 "— been had!"  
35 2003 company in the news

**DOWN**  
1 Long story  
2 Ship's framework  
3 Ear-related  
4 Neighbor of  
5 Writes a score  
6 Tulsa campus (Abbr.)  
7 Nasty stinger  
8 Pour  
9 Lengthy choral work  
10 Watch provocatively  
11 Green shade  
17 401(k) alternative  
19 Advertise  
22 Alephs' followers  
24 Barracks bed  
25 Whatever amount  
26 Had a memory jogged  
27 Vientiane people  
29 Eggs  
30 Still  
33 Look-alike  
36 Recently  
38 Home of many nuts?  
40 "Go, team!"  
42 "The Georgia Peach"  
43 Gumbo base  
44 Optimistic  
46 Sported  
47 In due course  
48 Longings  
50 Curly's cohort

Solution time: 24 mins.

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Saturday's answer 1-19

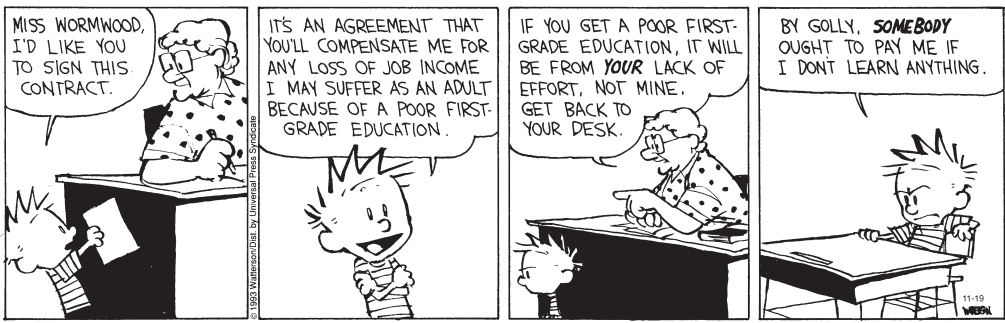
**STUMPED?**

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5951! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

## Ziggy®



## Calvin and Hobbes



## Adam@home



## Garfield®

by Jim Davis



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



Team Standings		
Group A		
SIP-Verizon	4	0
Bayani	2	2
SMF	2	2
CCA	2	2
MDX	0	4
Group B		
Visminda	4	1
Cabalen	4	1
Mobil-LIPS	4	1
Bicol	1	3
MIFICPA	1	3
Samahang Laguna	0	5



Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T
Yankees	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	7
Academy	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	8

SPORTS BRIEFS



# Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
AP SPORTS WRITER

**PORTLAND, Ore.** (AP) — Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

Stoudamire finished with 25 points and eight assists for the Trail Blazers, who returned home to snap a three-game losing streak.

After Kobe Bryant's layup evened it at 99, Rasheed Wallace hit a pair of free throws to put the Blazers ahead, and Zach Randolph hit an 8-foot jumper to make it 103-99.

Shaquille O'Neal's layup narrowed it for the Lakers, but Stoudamire's 3-pointer put the Blazers ahead 106-101 with 2:08 left.

Stoudamire hit another one to put the Blazers up 109-104 but a pair of foul shots kept the Lakers in it until Wallace's jumper bounced several times before falling to make it 111-106 and Portland held on for the final margin.

Wallace, who stirred controversy with a contentious interview earlier in the week, had 28 points and seven rebounds to help Portland improve to 11-4 at home.

The night before, the Lakers fell to the Dallas Mavericks 110-93, their first loss at home in 13 games this season. The loss to Dallas snapped a 10-game overall winning streak.

Bryant led the Lakers with 35 points, and O'Neal had 22 points and 10 rebounds.

The Blazers, who led by as many as 10, jumped out to an early 13-6 lead on Randolph's

layup. Los Angeles narrowed it to 19-18 on Karl Malone's jumper, but Portland responded with Wallace's 3-pointer and Dale Davis' dunk.

After the Blazers took a 47-37 lead on Stoudamire's 3-pointer, the Lakers went on a 12-2 run to even it at 49, and the teams were even at 54 at halftime.

Bryant, who did not even take a shot in the first quarter, scored 11 points in the second.

The Lakers went up 70-67 on O'Neal's consecutive dunks, and led by as many as five points - but the Blazers kept it close and the two teams went on to trade the lead nine times in the third quarter.

Randolph had 24 points and 11 rebounds for Portland.

Wallace received a number of boos from the home fans when he was introduced before the game.

Wallace charged in an interview earlier in the week that the NBA's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself. He also used objectionable language.

There was widespread criticism of the comments, including a statement from NBA commissioner David Stern. Wallace issued an apology before the game, saying he regretted using the objectionable language but stood by his right to express his opinions.

## Knicks 95, Nuggets 88

At New York, Antonio McDyess scored a season-high 15 points against the team that traded him nearly 18 months ago, leading the New York Knicks past the Denver Nuggets 95-88 to snap a six-game losing streak.

McDyess made his first start since March of 2002, replacing Kurt Thomas (sore knee) on New York's front line.



Portland Trail Blazers Damon Stoudamire shoots for two during the second half of their game with the Los Angeles Lakers Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Portland, Ore.

Carmelo Anthony led Denver with 25 points, and Marcus Camby added 12 points and 12 rebounds in his first appearance at Madison Square Garden since the Knicks sent him to Denver as part of the five-player trade that brought McDyess to New York.

## Clippers 106, Suns 91

At Los Angeles, Quentin Richardson scored 25 points and Corey Maggette had 23 in the Los Angeles Clippers' 106-91

victory over Phoenix, the Suns' fifth straight loss.

Stephon Marbury had 30 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for the Suns.

## Spurs 86, Rockets 73

At San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 16 points and Tony Parker had 14 points and 12 assists to help San Antonio beat Houston for the second time in three days, 86-73.

Steve Francis paced Houston with 17 points, 13 of them in the

second half. Yao Ming and Jim Jackson each had 11 points.

## Bulls 86, Pacers 75

At Chicago, Jamal Crawford and Kirk Hinrich scored 18 points apiece and the Chicago Bulls used a 16-0 third-quarter run to beat the Indiana Pacers 86-75.

Indiana, tied for the most road wins in the NBA with nine, got 23 points from Ron Artest, including the Pacers' first 10 in a 15-point fourth quarter.

## Grizzlies 110, Nets 63

At Memphis, Tenn., Bonzi Wells had 22 points in the Memphis Grizzlies' most lopsided victory in franchise history, a 110-63 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Memphis had six players in double figures, including Mike Miller and Swift with 18 each. Miller also had seven assists.

Pau Gasol had 12 points and nine rebounds, and Lorenzen Wright and Earl Watson had 10 points each.

Kenyon Martin led New Jersey with 12 points. Aaron Williams and Jason Kidd, with 4-of-14 shooting, had 10 points each.

## Celtics 105, Cavaliers 98

At Cleveland, Paul Pierce scored a season-high 41 points and stole the ball from LeBron James in the final minute to help the Boston Celtics win their fifth straight game, 105-98 over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

James scored a season-high 37 points, but Cleveland's rookie star missed a 3-pointer in the last two minutes and was stripped by Pierce with 15 seconds to go.

## Magic 105, Hawks 102

At Atlanta, Tracy McGrady capped a late rally with a 20-foot jumper, giving the Orlando Magic a 105-102 victory over

## NBA STANDINGS

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	12	11	.522	-
Boston	12	12	.500	1/2
New Jersey	11	12	.478	1
New York	8	16	.333	4 1/2
Miami	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Washington	7	15	.318	4 1/2
Orlando	4	20	.167	8 1/2

#### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	18	6	.750	-
New Orleans	17	7	.708	1
Toronto	13	9	.591	4
Detroit	14	10	.583	4
Milwaukee	11	12	.478	6 1/2
Atlanta	7	18	.280	11 1/2
Chicago	6	16	.273	11
Cleveland	6	17	.261	11 1/2

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

#### Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	14	8	.636	-
Denver	14	9	.609	1/2
San Antonio	15	10	.600	1/2
Houston	13	9	.591	1
Memphis	13	9	.591	1
Minnesota	13	9	.591	1
Utah	12	10	.545	2

#### Pacific Division

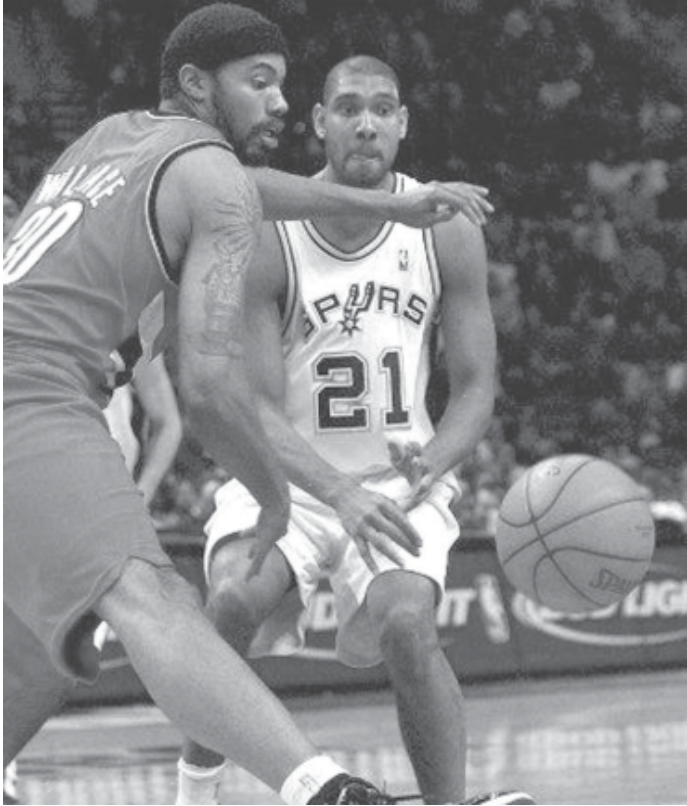
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	18	5	.783	-
Sacramento	15	5	.750	1 1/2
Portland	11	10	.524	6
Seattle	10	10	.500	6 1/2
Golden State	10	11	.476	7
L.A. Clippers	8	11	.421	8
Phoenix	8	15	.348	10

By the Associated Press

the Atlanta Hawks.

Shammond Williams finished off the comeback with a steal and five free throws, helping the Magic win for the third time in four games after losing 19 straight. McGrady had 30 points.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim had 25 for the Hawks, who have lost seven of their last eight games. Stephen Jackson added 20 points and Dion Glover had 19.



Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace (30) tries to block a pass by San Antonio Spurs forward Tim Duncan (21) during the second quarter in San Antonio, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2003.

# Wallace apologizes for interview language

By ANNE M. PETERSON  
AP SPORTS WRITER

**PORTLAND, Ore.** (AP)—Portland Trail Blazers forward Rasheed Wallace apologized Saturday for using objectionable language in an interview in which he criticized the NBA's "white establishment."

"I made a few comments that some people found objectionable," Wallace said in a statement. "Like everyone, I have a right to express an opinion, which I did."

"But, I regret using street language to express my opinion because everyone has focused on these few comments when I said other things. It was not my intent to offend anyone."

Wallace's statement, issued before the Blazers' game against the Los Angeles Lakers, was punctuated by his apology.

"So, if I offended any of my

teammates, fellow NBA players, the Trail Blazer fans and organization, I apologize," he said. "I have nothing more to say about this matter."

On Friday, NBA commissioner David Stern called Wallace's comments to The Oregonian newspaper "ignorant and offensive to all NBA players."

In a wide-ranging interview published Thursday, Wallace charged that the league's white establishment is exploiting young black athletes to enrich itself.

The 29-year-old Wallace said he's not like the younger players who get "caught up and captivated into the league."

"No. I see behind the lines. I see behind the false screens. I know what this business is all about. I know the commissioner of this league makes more than three-quarters of the players in this league," he said.

Some of Wallace's comments included objectionable language.

"Mr. Wallace's hateful diatribe was ignorant and offensive to all NBA players," Stern said. "I refuse to enhance his heightened sense of deprivation by publicly debating with him."

"Since Mr. Wallace did not direct his comments at any particular individuals other than me, I think it best to leave it to the Trail Blazers' organization and its players and fans to determine the attitudes by which they wish to be defined."

Wallace, in his eighth year with Portland, is set to earn nearly \$17 million this season. He is averaging 16.4 points and 7.3 rebounds.

Last season, Wallace was suspended by the league for seven games for threatening an official on the loading dock at the Rose Garden Arena after a game.

It was the longest suspension ever handed down that did not involve physical contact or substance abuse.

In the 2000-01 season, he set the NBA record with 41 technical fouls.

Wallace's comments are the latest problem to befall the Blazers, who have been plagued by player arrests and team infighting since last season.

"I agree with the commissioner that there is no reason to continue the public debate on this issue," Blazers president Steve Patterson said.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said that as a former player, he understands the idea of questioning authority, but said Wallace hurt himself by injecting race into the issue.

"It's not about the money, it's about the little things that go with the job that I think gets to some of the players," Jackson said.



# Okla. QB Jason White wins Heisman Trophy

By JOSH DUBOW  
AP SPORTS WRITER



**NEW YORK (AP)**—Jason White capped a remarkable comeback with college football's most prestigious award, winning the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night a year after an injury nearly ended his career.

The Oklahoma quarterback, who almost quit football following his second major knee injury in September 2002, beat out Pittsburgh receiver Larry Fitzgerald by 128 points for the award.

"Last year about this time, I was sitting at home watching the Heisman and thought how neat it would be to be there, to be one of the finalists," White said. "I never thought, after two surgeries, that I'd be here."

White threw 40 touchdown passes and led the third-ranked Sooners to 12 straight wins to open the season and a spot in the Bowl Championship Series title game against No. 2 LSU.

Even a subpar performance in a loss in the Big 12 title game last week against Kansas State couldn't stop White from winning the award. His three months of brilliance before that were more than enough to persuade voters to pick him.

White, The Associated Press Player of the Year, led the nation in passing efficiency, completing 64 percent of his passes for 3,744 yards and only eight interceptions.

White beat Fitzgerald 1,481-1,353. Eli Manning was third with 710 points and Chris Perry was next with 341.

Voters list three choices on their ballots, and players are awarded three points for first place, two for second and one for third.

White, the first Oklahoma player

since Billy Sims in 1978 to win the Heisman, had 319 first-place votes, 204 seconds and 116 thirds.

Fitzgerald, who set an NCAA record with touchdown catches in 18 straight games, had 253 firsts, 233 seconds and 128 thirds. He was trying to become the first sophomore to win the award.

Manning became the third member of his family to come close but fall short for the Heisman. His father, Archie, finished fourth in 1969 and third the following year, while older brother, Peyton, came in second in 1997.

Manning, who passed for 3,341 yards with 27 touchdowns this season, had 95 firsts, 132 seconds and 161 thirds.

Perry, who was fifth in the nation with 132.4 yards rushing per game and also scored 19 touchdowns, came in fourth with 27 firsts, 66 seconds and 128 thirds.

Three of the four finalists struggled with their conference titles on the line, with only Perry delivering in a 204-yard, two-TD game in a 35-21 victory against Ohio State.

Just as one bad game didn't stop Oklahoma from making it to the Sugar Bowl, it also didn't stop White, who was helped by the 50 percent of voters who cast their ballots before that game. Fitzgerald got the most points from people who voted in the final week, but it wasn't enough to catch White.

White became the fourth Sooner to win the Heisman, joining Sims, Steve Owens (1969) and Billy Vessels (1952). Sims was sitting with his former coach, Barry Switzer, in the audience and yelled encouragement to White as he walked up to accept the award.

White is hoping to become the third quarterback to win the Heisman and the national title in the same season, joining Florida State's Charlie Ward (1993) and

Florida's Danny Wuerffel (1996).

Recent Heisman-winning quarterbacks haven't fared so well, with Florida State's Chris Weinke (2000) and Nebraska's Eric Crouch (2001) both following up their Heisman wins with subpar title-game performances.

Kansas State running back Darren Sproles was fifth, followed by Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart, North Carolina State quarterback Philip Rivers, USC receiver Mike Williams, Miami of Ohio quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and Texas Tech quarterback B.J. Symons.

A regional voting breakdown had White winning the Far West, Southwest and South regions. Fitzgerald won the Midwest, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.

The award completes an amazing transformation that began on Sept. 7, 2002, when White crumpled to the turf against Alabama with a torn right knee ligament. He had injured the same ligament on the other knee a year earlier and contemplated quitting the sport he loves.

His father persuaded him not to give up and White soon began the hard road back.

"I wanted to be back on the field with my teammates," White said. "For a while, it didn't seem like it would happen."

Hours of rehab finally paid off when coach Bob Stoops told White he won a four-way competition for the job before the start of fall practice.

In a season where remaining healthy and keeping the starting job would have been a great accomplishment, White did so much more.

The small-town kid from Tuttle, Okla., quickly answered all those questions. Performing in stadiums with nearly 20 times as many fans as live in his home town, displayed the poise and



AP  
Oklahoma's quarterback Jason White (18) passes in the first quarter against Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas, in this Nov. 22, 2003 photo. White won the 2003 Heisman Trophy, awarded Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003 in New York.

touch necessary to turn Oklahoma into a record-setting offense.

He threw at least two touchdowns in his first 12 games, including 13 in the three games before the Big 12 championship. His pinpoint accuracy helped his receivers break big runs after the catch and helped the team score at

least 50 points seven times this season.

"His emergence as a great, great football player is the story of college football," Stoops said. "The biggest difference in our team is that Jason White is the quarterback. It ought to be pretty obvious."

It turned out it was to the Heisman voters.

## Red Sox sign Keith Foulke; Yanks get RHP Kevin Brown

By BEN WALKER  
AP BASEBALL WRITER



**NEW ORLEANS (AP)**—The Boston Red Sox revved-up the AL East arms race by closing a deal for All-Star closer Keith Foulke on Saturday, hours before the New York Yankees completed their trade for Kevin Brown.

In a flurry of activity at the winter meetings, outfielders Mike Cameron, J.D. Drew and Juan Encarnacion found new homes.

Roger Clemens just may have one, too. In town for a function, he left open the possibility of coming out of retirement to pitch for the Houston Astros.

Cameron personally came to the fringe of the French Quarter this week, hoping to get a deal done. The free agent found one with the New York Mets.

The Yankees finalized their swap with Los Angeles, getting Brown for Jeff Weaver and two other players.

"To walk into a clubhouse that's going to be filled with people who have such a great history of playing winning ball, it's a great opportunity for me at the end of my career," Brown said.

Atlanta filled its need for a right fielder by obtaining Drew in a five-player trade with St. Louis. Desperate for hitters, Los Angeles acquired Encarnacion from Florida.



AP  
American League pitcher Keith Foulke of the Oakland Athletics delivers in the ninth inning of the 74th annual All Star game, Tuesday, July 15, 2003, at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago.

Foulke decided against re-signing with Oakland. Instead, the free agent reliever who led the AL with 43 saves last season reached agreement with the Red Sox on a deal that guarantees him \$24 million.

"I want to be a winner before I go out," Foulke said.

Foulke got a three-year deal with an option for a fourth season, completing

the contract after taking a physical.

"We acquired Keith Foulke not because he's a closer, but because we believe he's one of the best pitchers in baseball," Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein said.

Foulke joins starter Curt Schilling as top pitchers acquired by the Red Sox since the season ended. Boston also is talking about getting AL MVP Alex

Rodriguez from Texas in a trade for Manny Ramirez.

"It was a solid team before they added Curt Schilling. That really showed their commitment to winning," Foulke said.

The 31-year-old righty was 9-1 with and a 2.08 ERA for Oakland last season.

The Red Sox haven't won the World Series since 1918, with the Yankees often getting in the way. Since losing in this year's Series, the Yankees have traded for pitchers Javier Vazquez and Brown.

The Yankees also lost Andy Pettitte to Houston, and there remains a chance that Clemens might join him to pitch for the hometown Astros.

The Rocket was in New Orleans for a banquet and said that while he still considers himself retired, he's at least thinking about playing for Houston.

"I know Roger has told me he was retiring. That was our understanding," Yankees GM Brian Cashman said. "But I also understand he's a human being. We all have a chance to change our minds and that's life."

In a deal that's been brewing, the Yankees got Brown for Weaver, minor league pitcher Yhency Brazoban and a player to be named. Brown, 38, is a six-time All-Star.

After letting loose Gary Sheffield - who is close to going to the Yankees, too - the Braves wanted a right fielder with a good bat. They hope they found

one in Drew, getting him with all-purpose player Eli Marrero from St. Louis for pitchers Jason Marquis, Adam Wainwright and Ray King.

"Adam is our No. 1 pitching prospect and that was tough to do, but under the circumstances we had no choice," Atlanta GM John Schuerholz said.

Drew, 28, has been full of promise since becoming the fifth pick of the 1998 draft. But he's been hurt a lot, going on the disabled list five times in the last four years.

Drew hit .289 last season with 15 homers and 42 RBIs in 100 games.

"He's been a guy that has been touted with all kinds of talent through the years," Braves manager Bobby Cox said. "Unfortunately, he's had all kinds of injuries."

Cameron reached agreement with the Mets on a three-year deal for \$19.5 million. The former Gold Glove center fielder must pass a physical before the deal is done.

The Dodgers were eager to add offense after scoring a major league-low 574 runs last season. Encarnacion, 27, joined catcher Ivan Rodriguez, first baseman Derek Lee and closer Ugueth Urbina as players to leave the Marlins since they won the title.

Encarnacion hit .270 with 19 home runs and 94 RBIs last season. He had a team-high 37 doubles and also stole 19 bases. He hasn't made an error in his last 220 games.



## SPORTS BRIEFS

**Table tennis singles tourney tomorrow**

The Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association is inviting the public to join the 2004 MATTA Open Singles Table Tennis Tournament.

The tournament will begin tomorrow and will continue throughout the rest of the month. It will be held Tuesday and Thursday nights at the multi-purpose room of the Gilbert C. Ada Ada Gymnasium.

The tournament format will be round-robin type of competition for the initial round where each participant will play all the other members of their division once.

Those who win the most games will move on to the elimination phase and playoffs.

Admission fee for the tournament will be \$10 per participant. Trophies will be presented to the winners of their respective divisions during an after-tournament dinner.

Children who wish to participate should inform their parents and ask for their consent. For more information please call Steve Lim at 483-7842.

**21st Island Relay set for Dec. 28**

Officials of the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay announced that this year's 13.7-mile team event is set to take place during the early morning hours of December 28.

The starting point of the course will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot. Participants will then head north and work their way to the finish line at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

Interested teams may register at the starting point of the race, which will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot in San Antonio. Registration begins at 5:15am.

Each team, which consists of five members, must switch runners every mile. It is also required that each team has at least one female participant or a participant who is under the age of 16 or in the senior division. Prior to competing, all teams must pay a fee of \$25.

For more information about the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay, please contact Elias Rangamar at 234-1001 or 1002.

**Budweiser Cup on Jan. 12**

Officials of the much-awaited Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands Budweiser Cup have decided to push back the kick of date of the 2003 island-wide men's basketball season to January 12 of next year.

So far, 10 teams have shown interest in participating in the league. Only eight, however, are confirmed to battle for the championship crown and the \$1,000 grand prize that goes along with it. Also at stake are the \$300 prize for the runner-up and the \$200 award for the second runner-up.

Each team interested in taking part in the season is required to pay an entrance fee of \$900 that must be payable to BANMI.

Aside from the prizes awarded to the top three finishers, other prizes may be claimed through a half-court shot competition and a three-point contest.

For more information, please contact Rangamar at 664-2500 or Abner Venus at 234-5911.

**SPG Council launches logo contest**

The South Pacific Games Council Executive Board has announced that it will be selecting a new logo for the SPG Council. The winning logo will be selected from designs submitted through the national sports federations represented on the Council.

The contest is open to everyone. The general public is invited to submit design proposals. The Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association will select one or more of the designs submitted to it, for transmission to the SPG Council.

All entries should be submitted to NMASA President Michael A. White. The selection of a new design will take place at the SPG Council assembly in Palau next year.

For further information, please contact White at telephone 234-6547.

**IT'S CABALEN**

From Page 28

fouling out.

In the first game, the UFO All-Stars finally notched a win after beating Bicol Express-RNV Construction 53-44.

**First Game**

**UFO All-Stars 53**—Mendiola 20, Malasarte 13, Pardinan 10, Gatdula 6, Canedo 4.

**Bicol-RNV Construction 44**—Jugos 15, Aldan 10, Abadilla 6,

Lopez 6, Miday 5, Mumar 2.

**Second Game**

**Cabalen-RP Construction 121**—Mendoza 25, Delos Reyes 35, Ocampo 13, Alipio 12, Arnedo 12, Jo. Gatdula 6, Magcalas 5, Sinca 3, Barbo 2.

**SIP-Verizon 103**—R. Alegre 19, Mendoza 18, Guiab 14, Factor 13, Rapanut 13, Villacrusis 9, T. Alegre 7, Tamondong 5, Flores 3, Garcia 2.

**Scoring by quarters:** 24-27, 59-50, 90-79, 121-103.

# Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

By MARK RABAGO  
REPORTER



Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

The Olango, Zambales native triumphed three straight times after getting a bye in the opening round then turned back a courageous effort by Ike Celis to win the Tuesday 8-ball plum.

Sequioco first victimized Cherish Reyes in the second round before getting the better of Celis in the next round. He then slammed perennial pool winner Manny Mariano in the winners' bracket final to secure the first finals berth and the all-important twice-to-beat advantage.

Celis, for his part, had to work double time after being relegated to losers' bracket play by the crafty Sequioco.

The silver-haired Celis rebounded quickly and nicely by first beating Round Two owner Don Pangelinan. He then eliminated top lady player Rosemarie Moses-Arnold before moving on to the losers' bracket final opposite Mariano.

The outing against Mariano was where Celis truly shone, as the veteran pool player shocked the Filipino cue artist and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left: Third place Manny Mariano, Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament champion Boyet Sequioco, and runner-up Ike Celis.

arranged a championship round meeting with third round conqueror Sequioco.

Unfortunately for Celis his sparkling run apparently ran out in the deciding match against Sequioco, allowing the Hafa Adai security guard to come away with the weekly pool title. He won a handsome trophy and the \$40 top prize for his efforts.

Celis settled for the \$25 runner-up purse, while Mariano took home the \$15 third place

prize. All three men also got souvenir caps from Pacific Trading Co.

Other billiard players that graced the Tuesday 8-ball competition were Gary Ridley, Lars and Palacios.

The Round Two 8-Ball Tournament is held every Tuesday starting at 8pm and has an entry fee of \$10.

Round Two also regularly hosts two other pool tournaments through the course

of the week. Its winner-take-all pool tournament is held every Sunday starting at 1pm and costs \$5 to join.

On Thursdays, Round Two holds the exciting Miller Lite Invitational 8-Ball Tournament starting at 8pm. Entry fee is \$15 on regular days but goes up to \$25 every last Thursday of the month.

For more information on Round Two's tournaments, please contact Don Pangelinan at 234-6930.

**ROCBALL**

From Page 28

WATTS, wrote that that the program, which features shows on different sports from around the world, would like to attain footage, pictures, and information of Rocball for airing.

Feger also confirmed that he will send a couple of videotapes, information about the history of the sport, rules, and several articles and news clippings to Chimienti.

Eurosport reaches over 95 million homes in 54 countries.

Also being attracted to the sport is Brian Meredith, an operation manager for CrackerJax, a sports-theme

amusement park in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Meredith stated in his letter to Feger that he is currently searching for ways to make their three volleyball courts useful, and was intrigued after coming across some information about Rocball while browsing through the Internet.

Meredith added that he is trying to modify the courts to Rocball standards and is working towards starting a Rocball league.

"I can't believe that nobody in America plays this sport," Meredith stated.

Last year, Feger scheduled a special match featuring 2001 and 2002 champions DX and Jammers, which was taped and

sent to the Fox Sports Show "You Gotta See This." Fox Sports Show's Associate Producer Eric Hopkins expressed his interest in the sport. Camera crews were set up at courtside and on the roof of the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

He also sent a couple of videotapes, written information, and graphics to the Rocball Federation of India.

In related news, the World Organized Rocball Inter-scholastic and Community League's 2004 season is set to get underway on January 12.

Teams will engage in several practice rounds prior to seeing battle in the preliminary rounds, which is expected to kick off just

a couple of weeks later.

All interested players are encouraged to begin organizing squads for the league, which unlike other sporting events, doesn't require an entrance fee.

All matches will be played at the Marianas High School Green Court. Should Mother Nature interrupt with wet showers, matches will be played at the school's gym.

Feger began organizing and writing about the sport while in Japan in 1979. After two years of experimenting, the sport finally progressed into a tournament in 1983.

For more information, please contact Feger at 664-3810 or 288-8722.

**LOVE**

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on the next two holes, then easily reached the par-5 11th with a 5-iron to set up his fourth straight birdie.

"I had my pompoms out, cheering him on," Woods said. "I told him on the 10th tee I was two ahead. He said, 'How's that?' I told him I was getting a stroke a hole."

Love smiled when asked about Woods' comments.

"I didn't want to stick my hand in the cage and ask him if he wanted strokes," Love said.

Indeed, Love put seven shots between him and Woods over the first nine holes, and it left himself in great position to become the

first repeat winner of the Target World Challenge since Woods created it five years ago.

Love won in 2000 with a 64 in the final round.

It would be a great way to end his best season on tour. Love won four times, and no victory bigger than his final-round 64 at The Players Championship on a cold, windy day at Sawgrass.

While this tournament only counts in the bank - \$1.2 million of the \$5 million purse going to the winner - a victory would be meaningful coming against a 16-man field of high-ranked players and three of the four major champions.

Plus, Love has played the last two rounds with Woods, a

situation that in the past hasn't allowed him to play his best.

Love has worked all year to worry about only his own game. In fact, he was having dinner with friends Friday night when they told him to beat Woods.

"K.J. is the guy to beat right now," Love said. "People don't see it the way we do. You've got to beat the golf course."

Harrington missed a 3-foot par putt on the final hole for a 70 and was in third place at 211, six shots behind. Masters champion Mike Weir, who opened with a 75, had a 3-under 69 and was at 212.

Choi is making his first appearance in the final event of the year, and would like nothing

better to end his season with a victory - even though it doesn't count in the record books and won't get him back to Kapalua.

"It would be even better ... because of the field," Choi said.

Catching up to Love could require a great round, especially the way Love is playing. The calm, warmer conditions allowed the ball to travel farther and the power hitters to play more aggressively.

Love's only bogey came on a three-putt from 15 feet, when his eyes saw only the hole and not the speed of the putt; he ran it 8 feet by and missed the par putt.

"Other than that, I felt like I could make birdie on every hole," Love said. "And I almost did."





### Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

### Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

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28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

# It's Cabalen against Visminda

By MARK RABAGO  
REPORTER

## RP Construction dethrones SIP, 121-103

**C**abalen-RP Construction reaffirmed their mastery over SIP-Verizon dethroning the three-time defending champion with a 121-103 rout Sunday night that secured them a finals ticket opposite Visminda-Country House in the 2003 UFO Miller Lite Cup championship.

The Transamerica-backed squad atoned for a shaky start, which had them trail SIP-Verizon 27-24 after the opening quarter, with a terrific second quarter.

Big man Ronald Delos Reyes, the goat in Cabalen's 103-108 loss to Visminda last week, came back strong and hit a couple of triples in the second stanza to start the fireworks for Cabalen.

Youthful center Ryan Mendoza, meanwhile, complemented Delos Reyes' sharpshooting ways by scoring 12 points from point blank range also in the second quarter.

The combination of efficient outside shooting and strong inside play translated to a 59-50 halftime advantage for Cabalen.

SIP-Verizon, whose players

came in late due to a mix-up in scheduling, continued to take on water and struggled mightily in the second half.

Cabalen's aggressive game had their opponents on the defensive during the early part of the third period. Another 3-pointer by Delos Reyes at the 8:03 mark of the quarter gave Cabalen its biggest lead so far at 68-54.

A few plays later, Mendoza struck again on the inside to pad their edge further at 72-54 with 6:47 remaining in the period.

Following a putback by Delos Reyes on a miss free throw off a 3-point opportunity by Mendoza, the score stood at 89-68 with less than two minutes left in the third.

But SIP-Verizon was far from gone and retaliated with an 11-3 burst to close the quarter that cut their deficit to 90-79.

Cabalen's Mendoza also chipped in to SIP-Verizon's cause, inadvertently making a layup on SIP-Verizon's basket after an inbound play following a timeout with 31 ticks to go.

The big end-game rally, however, didn't materialize for SIP-Verizon as Cabalen

thwarted all attempts at an uprising and maintained their healthy lead all throughout the final quarter.

There were still a lot of scary moments though. With Cabalen up 96-84, SIP-Verizon forward Gary Rapanut missed a routine layup that could've cut the lead to 10 points.

At the 5:31 mark of the game Edsel Mendoza missed two tries from the free throw line and in the succeeding SIP-Verizon offensive, newly arrived Leo Factor missed the bonus free throw on a 3-point play that could've slashed Cabalen's lead again to 10 points.

With SIP-Verizon still within striking distance swingman Junar Guiab was hit with his fifth personal foul with 4:05 to go. Shortly after Factor followed him to the showers.

Playing-coach Rick Alegre's coast-to-coast layup made it 108-97 with 2:52 left in the game but that appeared to be SIP-Verizon's last gasp as Cabalen went on a 9-2 tear highlighted by an off-balanced 3-point play

by Randy Arnedo that, for all intents and purpose, sealed the game at 117-99 with 1:33 remaining.

Mendoza earned Miller Lite MVP of the Game honors after scoring

35 points, which was the same output submitted by Delos Reyes. Veterans Alex Ocampo, Jun Alipio added 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Rick Alegre topscored for SIP-Verizon with 19 points. Edsel Mendoza chipped in 16 points and Guiab 14 before

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### Rocball gains interest yet again

By SHAN SEMAN  
REPORTER



Saipan's very own sport, Rocball, is steadily gaining more interest from the outside world.

This was learned late last week after founder and organizer James Feger announced that he has received e-mails from a couple organizations, Eurosport TV and a sports amusement park in Arizona, interested in gaining more information about the sport.

Eurosport, the most widely available sports channel in Europe, has made contact with Feger and has shown interest in learning more about the sport for future broadcasting.

In an e-mail letter to Feger, Pablo Chimienti of Eurosport's weekly program

See ROCBALL on Page 27

## Love pulls away from Tiger at Sherwood

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP GOLF WRITER



**THOUSAND OAKS, Calif.** (AP)—Davis Love III made four straight birdies to leave Tiger Woods in the dust and pull away from a world-class field Saturday, finishing with a 9-under 63 to build a three-shot lead in the Target World Challenge.

Despite a bogey on the par-3 17th, Love tied the tournament record set last year by Pdraig Harrington in the third round. Harrington built a record six-shot lead and hung on to win against Woods.

Love, at 11-under 205, only had a three-shot margin over K.J. Choi (65), although he won't have to worry about Woods.

As most of the leaders were posting birdies on a sunny, benign afternoon at Sherwood, the tournament host gave up ground with a three-putt bogey



Tiger Woods reacts to his approach shot on the 18th hole during the third round of the Target World Challenge, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

on No. 3 and then hit his tee shot into the water for a bogey on the next hole.

Woods lost all hope on the final hole, hitting off the pine

straw and coming up well short, into the water, and he had to make a 15-footer for bogey. He had a 72 and was nine shots back at 214.

Meanwhile, Love played some of his best golf since early in the year. "I was confident all day," Love said. "I'm getting more and more comfortable playing with Tiger and around the lead."

Love was tied with Choi and Justin Leonard when his 4-iron on the difficult par-3 8th climbed just enough to hop into the fringe and stop about 6 feet above the hole for one of only two birdies in the round.

Love holed putts of 20 feet and 15 feet for birdies

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